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THE
CENTAUR
NOT
FABULOUS.

IN
Six LETTERS to a FRIEND,
ON
The LIFE in VOGUE.

The SECOND EDITION, Corrected.

Doth he not speak Parables? Ezek.



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TO THE
LADY * * * * *

MADAM,

YOUR Ladyship's character is so well known, that the Public would blame me, if I presented not these Papers to You, who can so readily put them into the hands of those who want them most.

You will, probably, ask, why *The CENTAUR* is prefix'd as a Title to them. The *Men of Pleasure*, the
licen-

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licentious, and profligate, are the subject of these Letters; and in such, as in the fabled Centaur, the Brute runs away with the Man: therefore I call them *Centaur*s. And farther, I call them Centaurs *not fabulous*, because by their scarce half-human conduct, and character, that enigmatical, and purely ideal figure of the Antients, is not unriddled only, but *realized*.

Your Ladyship's curiosity is great; and you, possibly, are willing to know what account antiquity gives of the family, or rather breed, of the *Centaur*s. It is as follows.

Of the Centaurs the most celebrated was CHIRON. He was a great Botanist; and our bitter herb Centory takes its name from him. He thought all herbs bitter, because,
being

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being very amorous, he could not find any amongst them, that could abate the fever in his blood: and he left a complaint in the Greek language to that purpose; which Ovid, sick of the same disease, has translated, and transmitted to posterity in his works.

But he was not only a Botanist, but a great master of Music: He compos'd an exquisite piece of harmony for young Achilles his pupil, which charm'd Deidamia to his embraces; by whom he had Pyrrhus, in the court of her father Nicomedes, a little before he dropp'd his petticoats, and put on his boots for the Trojan war. But what will endear to your Ladyship CHIRON's memory beyond any the most re-

B nown'd

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noun'd in story, is, that he was not only the venerable Father of OPERAS, but also the Son of a MASQUERADE; the very first of those numerous sons, with which that prolific Entertainment has since multiply'd mankind.

It happen'd thus: SATURN, false to his good wife OPS, had an intrigue with PHILLYRA. Seeing, one day, his injur'd spouse coming to disturb their intimacy, for escape, he turn'd himself into a HORSE; which occasioned the noble equestrian figure of Chiron, his son.

This, Madam, was the very first of MASQUERADES. You see the virtuous occasion, and the laudable fruits of it. Jupiter's masquerading in the form of a BULL, was long
2 after

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after. Europe takes its name from EUROPA, whom he ran away with in that shape. And your friend Clodius says, that, probably, we celebrate HORNED MASQUERADES in memory of it. This is the recorded origin of that nocturnal assembly; and, indeed, it is evident to common sense, that a Masquerade had never existed, but for its *then* accidental, and *since* establish'd, suberviency to Love.

These, you will say, are wild Fables; but they are not without their Morals. This fable of Saturn, and Ops, means, that jealous CONSCIENCE, the Soul's lawful wife, will ever disturb licentious pleasure; and that there is no means of escaping the persecution, but by becoming quite brutal in it. This, and the follow-

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ing explanations of the mystical part of antiquity have been overlook'd by former Commentators, tho' BACON was among them.

There is a second moral in the present fable. CHIRON, Madam, was a *Man*, as much, I mean, as the gayer part of your acquaintance. Why then is he represented as a *Centaur*? For two reasons. He was, as I have said before, the son of Saturn, and a very lewd old fellow. Representing him as a Centaur, signifies, that Beings of origin truly celestial, may debase their nature, forfeit their character, and sink themselves, by licentiousness, into perfect beasts.

Secondly, it signifies, that the rest of the species, the sober part of mankind, *prejudic'd* by their abandon'd
man-

manners, may naturally *imagine*, that they hear them neighing after their wives, and daughters; galloping with more than human haste after temptations; and rather insolently prancing on four legs, than decently content with two. This, probably, is the meaning: First, because *Prejudice* greatly hurts our discernment, and transforms objects exceedingly. Secondly, because all allow that a Centaur is a mere creature of the *Imagination*.

But tho' Chiron was the most celebrated, yet was he not the most antient, of our mythological cavalry. Ixion was a primitive man of pleasure; a Gallant of Juno, and much in favour. Jupiter, less in his interest, interpos'd a cloud in her stead, which not long after was brought to bed of

the first Centaurs. From that hour Juno commenced a scold; and in that character Virgil makes her swear, that if she can't find friends in heaven, she will ransack hell for them.

This Amour of Ixion imports, the great *height* of our expectation, and as great *depth* of our disappointment, in illicit love. And JUPITER's interposing the cloud, intimates, that Heaven decrees this disappointment; and that therefore it is madness to flatter ourselves with hopes of the contrary. The fable would farther teach us, that our Imagination, fir'd by passion, imposes not only on our understandings, but our very senses, which take Clouds for Goddesses; and adore Darkness, as divine.

You

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You see, Madam, that Gallantry is hereditary in this illustrious *House*, I should say STABLE: That therefore Continnence may be construed as an argument of Bastardy. Who then can blame your gay friends for being loth to be bastardiz'd, and disinherited; to lose Honour, Patrimony, and Mistresses, together?

They keep clear of this imputation: but there is one particular, that speaks not so much in their favour; but rather calls their legitimacy in question. How comes it to pass, that the posterity of cloud-begotten Sires should be so cloudless a generation, that not one spot of stupidity can be found about them?

But tho' spotless in this point, they are not so in another; which may set

B 4 all

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all right again. DEIANIRA, as a charm to regain the love of her husband HERCULES, who was gone astray after OMPHALE, Queen of Lydia, sent him a shirt dipp'd in the blood of the Centaur NESSUS. But instead of answering her end, it gave him a distemper so virulent, as prov'd mortal. To balance the disadvantage above, some say, this distemper, at certain seasons, still runs in his race. Others rob our modern Centaurs of that credit; imputing their disorder to another cause. And, indeed, the present story tells us, that Ladies may convey somewhat else, when they mean only to make a present of their Love.

But worse than distemper is to be feared. You know, Madam, Ixion's remarkable punishment; but, probably,

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bably, not the full import of it. Jupiter, for the Father's sake, detesting his whole posterity, design'd Ixion's *wheel*, not only as an emblem of their endless rotation in unalter'd circles of present pleasures ; but also, as a prophecy of their future pains ; and an exact representation of that rack, which, Prudes say, they deserve for their Family-Feats.

And now, Madam, all things considered, have I named them wrong? I have named them as most men of antient renown were, from their personal qualities, and exploits. If you still think me to blame, I flatter myself you will change your mind, when you have read the Letters following.

This

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This address to your Ladyship, will my sober Readers say, is itself a *Centaur*, of the Pegasean kind, in which the untamed Imagination has too much run away with the Judgment, and carried it to enormous heights. If your Ladyship will venture, however, to be my Fellow-traveller, I promise to carry you safely to an Eminence in Fairy-land, from whence you shall survey the most surprising and amusing Scenē. To comply with your Taste, it shall even be a ludicrous one. Your favourite Centaurs shall be permitted to intrude even into the most solemn Groves of sacred Meditation. Their Grotesque Figures shall continually meet your Eye, where you the least expect, and where the severe Critic and the Prude (all but Centauresses are Prudes with

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with you) will be most scandalized to find them.

As a Pledge of this Promise, accept of my Frontispiece. It offers a Sketch which your Ladyship may employ a better hand to perfect.

The Statues of the Renown'd are set up in public, to kindle honest emulation. In most antient schools of wisdom were the Busts, or Portraits, of the wise. What, Madam, if for your modern Academy, *Hogarth* should draw a Centaur, not, as usual, with his bow and arrow, but (what will hit your mark as well) with Harlequin's sabre by his side; in a party-coloured jacket of pictur'd cards; a band of music before, a Scaramouch-Demon behind him; a Weathercock, on his head, a Rattle
in

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in his hand, the Decalogue under his feet; and, for the benefit of *your Scholars*, a Label out of his mouth, inscrib'd, as was the Temple of Apollo, with Γνωθι σεαυτὸν, in letters of gold [In ME, Know Thyself]; *They*, your Scholars, will take it in the true philosophic sense, and wonder how it came into the mouth of so ridiculous, and, to them, so foreign, a monster.

As your Ladyship's Assembly, of *all* our Hyppodromes, is the most renown'd, I hope you will favourably accept the wholesome Provender I send you. It is of an anti-circean nature; and may, possibly, turn your Monsters into Men.

But I detain you: It is SUNDAY NIGHT; and I hear a whole string of
of

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of your high-bred, unbridled, Colts coming in full career ; with a blaze in their foreheads, to outbrazen my rebukes ; and a spring in their heels, to bound high at your Balls.

*Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit
ungula campum.*

This, Madam, you understand better than They. But you begin to frown, as you always do at Praise. Fear not ; not one word of Compliment shall you have from me during our whole Journey. I shall carry you at first a heavy Trot through rough unbeaten ways, entertaining you unpolitely, with Discourse quite foreign to your way of Thinking ; such as passed in Correspondence between me and a Friend that would equally despise and be despised

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spised among such as you think yours. In the Progress of our Travels (which I honestly must tell you, will only touch upon, not terminate in, Fairy-land) I shall carry you into an unknown Country, where every thing is real, bright, and transporting. If there, compelled by the Force of sovereign Truth, I should not only assert, but convincingly prove, that you are of Rank more than Imperial, and present you with an unflattering Glass, in which, notwithstanding, your own form shall appear with all the charms of an Angel——But some Breathing-time is necessary to prepare for such an arduous Expedition. Therefore, I dismount for the present, and say no more.

I am, MADAM, &c.

LET-



LETTER I.
ON
INFIDELITY.





LETTER I.

ON

INFIDELITY.

Dear Sir,

MAKE no apology for your request, the *World* is your apology. The occasion calls louder on me, than my *friends* can possibly do; and robs me of the credit of having my compliance owing intirely to your desire. Alarm'd at our reigning pas-

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sion

2 *On* INFIDELITY.

sion for PLEASURE, you press me to write on that subject. Who can forbear? since if the present canine appetite for it should increase, where is that Bedlam which can receive a whole nation into proper methods of cure?

Your enjoining me one task has engaged me in two. Prevails not INFIDELITY as much as *Pleasure*? And for-ever they must prevail, or decrease, together. *Infidelity* is the parent of the Love of Pleasure in some; Eve doubted, and then eat; it is the consequence of it in others; most of Eve's daughters first taste, and then disbelieve. Pleasure, and Infidelity, reciprocally generate each other; and he that would reduce *one*, must strike at *both*.

These



On INFIDELITY. 3

These two, now national distempers, fairly divide us between them. One seizes the body; one the mind: and where these two fiery darts have taken place, the Destroyer may spare a third; his work is done. What then must be mine? The task is hard to extract them; for they seem, at present, to be not only poisoned, but barbed, arrows, in the British heart.

However I shall attempt, first, to make the *Infidel*, and then the *Voluptuary*, sensible of his error. I shall recommend belief, and virtue, in the room of doubt, and dissoluteness; and by (I hope) properly adapted *devotion*, assist their repentance; that necessary step of transition from one of these states, to the other. And considering into whose hands these Letters will *first* come (for I design them

4 On INFIDELITY.

for the press) with regard to yourself, I shall give you your friend *Eusebius's* character at large. And with regard to your Sister, I shall invite her, and her gay favourites, to a Funeral, instead of a Ball.

As the Mind is our superior part, I shall first speak of INFIDELITY, and then of PLEASURE. And it shall be my endeavour so to speak of both, as to render it the province of *Wit*, rather than *Wisdom*, to reply. What may silence wisdom, will but provoke wit, whose ambition it is to say most where least is to be said. You may as well attempt to silence an Echo by strength of voice, as a Wit by the force of reason. They both are but the louder for it; they both will have the last word. How often hear we men with great ingenuity

On INFIDELITY. 5

nuity supporting folly? that is, by wit destroying wisdom; as the same sort of men, by pleasure destroy happiness; prone to draw evil out of good, and set things at variance, which, by nature, are allies. Happiness, and Pleasure, as Wisdom, and Wit, are each other's friends, or foes; and if foes, of foes the worst. Well-chosen Pleasure is a branch of happiness; well-judging Wit is a flower of wisdom: but when these petty subalterns set up for themselves, and counteract their principals, one makes a greater wretch, and the other a grosser fool, than could exist without them.

Have we not a recent, and signal instance, how far wit can set wisdom at defiance, and, with its artful brilliances, dazzle common understand-

C 3 ings?

6 *On* INFIDELITY.

ings? That noble author * smiles at a certain text, of which I shall make a serious use, *viz. When the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, they begot Giants.* So when great talents fall in love with mean purposes, they beget errors of an enormous size, both in opinion, and in life. What more enormous than to let Infidelity gather such strength, even in our decline, as to stand the terrors of a death-bed, and bequeath proud legacies of its poison to the world? Is not this stretching out our boldness even beyond the day of tryal? Carrying the war into the very borders (if I may so speak) of that *dread Being* we dare oppose? and, desperately presuming on achieving that in our grave, of which a *Julian*, of equal genius, tho' not of equal guilt, despaired

* Lord Bolingbroke.

On INFIDELITY. 7

despaired on a throne ; and that the greatest on earth ? Julian was for defeating one Prophecy ; my Lord is for expunging them all ; and both with like success.

Take I too great a freedom ? It is both folly, and vice, to bear any man ill-will. But it is also folly, and vice, not so to behave, when occasion requires, as that our conduct may be mistaken for ill-will, if the prejudic'd think fit. Why should our opponents call that ill-will, which they, if they were of our opinion, and thought us in a fatal error, and heartily wish'd us well, would, necessarily, do out of perfect love ? If the Viscount's admirers resent out of zeal to his honour, I assure them, (tho' I have had no apparition) that

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his Lordship, now on my side, thanks them not for the favour.

That Truth was obscure, and Falshood specious, and Opinions endless; and that in these circumstances the mind of man could find no rest, because suspense is anxious, and assent almost inevitably betray'd into mistake; this was the sad, and just, complaint of the heathen world, which by God's dereliction had lost its way, and could not regain it, by the feeble glimmerings of natural light.

But of what have we to complain, who grope, and wander, and stumble, at noon-day? Ours is not ignorance, but perverseness; not want of a guide, but defection from him. Our noble author, so much admired, because so much in the wrong, declares
our

On INFIDELITY. 9

our light to be darkness; and with the boasted acuteness of his superior understanding, instead of couching those that are blind, is for putting out the eyes of those that see. Thus, Heaven's supreme blessing on us in the Gospel, is not annulled only, by our perverseness; but turn'd to much hurt. We are favour'd to our misfortune, we are enrich'd to our loss.

The heathens courted Truth as a mistress, with warm, and sincere, addresses, but could not obtain her. We, having obtain'd her, treat her, as an abandon'd age the lawful partners of their beds, with satiety, and disgust, and a wild desire after new embraces. And what have we embraced? Thus runs, at best, the palatable doctrine of an age too knowing

ing

10 *On* INFIDELITY.

ing to need instruction, too proud to bear it, from Heaven itself.

“ Whatever notices of duty to
“ God, or Man, are imprinted in us
“ by nature, or deduced by reason,
“ these are obliging, and necessary
“ to be perform’d by all ; as the na-
“ tural religion : but as for any po-
“ sitive institutions, or particular
“ forms of religion, these are of hu-
“ man origin, stamp’d in the politi-
“ cal mints of craft, interest, or am-
“ bition ; a coin current for the vul-
“ gar only.” It is fit, it seems, that
the vulgar should be fetter’d, that
their superiors may expatiate more at
large, and not fear to meet with ri-
vals in them. And, indeed, if the
vulgar had the same principles, and
opinions, with many of their masters,
their masters would have as fair a
chance

On INFIDELITY. 11

chance to have their throats cut, as the murderer to be hang'd for it.

As to God, they say, "The natural religion commands us to think worthily, and speak reverently, of Him: but, as some have thought churches derogatory to the notions of an Omnipresent Being; so formal prayers, and solemn services, are no way necessary to a Being Omniscient." They present Him (if with any) with a more sublime, and philosophical devotion, stripp'd of all externals, invisible as the Deity, and, indeed, as incomprehensible to the multitude; whose religion, like themselves, must have a body, as well as a soul; or it will evaporate into nothing. Thus, under pretence of a compliment to one divine attribute, they rob all of the worship due to them.

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them. They pretend to give God exalted homage; as the Jews array'd our blessed Lord in a purple robe, to mock him, not adore. And here our undissembled neglect, if not contempt, of religion, and our bare-faced venality setting all, even souls, to sale, cannot but recal to mind, that these sister iniquities, as if naturally connected, went hand-in-hand (as the Historian tells us), towards the ruin of the *Roman* empire.

Deos negligere, omnia venalia habere.*

As to the duties of the second table, they tell us, that “ the precepts
“ of nature run evidently against
“ injuries, and injustice ; we must,
“ by no means, commit rapine, or
“ murder : these are unfociable
“ crimes :

• Salust.

On INFIDELITY. 13

“ crimes: But as for any pleasurable
“ enjoyments of ourselves, why de-
“ prive ourselves of these? Why
“ starve at a feast Heaven sets before
“ us? We cannot conceive God to
“ be a tyrant; to what end has he
“ given desires, but that we should
“ satisfy them? or appetites, but
“ that we should indulge them?
“ Anger and Lust, if constitutional,
“ are venial sins.”

Thus the sluices are set open for all sensuality, promiscuous incontinence, and studied arts of excess, to pour in uncontrouled; and by a second compliment to the Deity, as sincere as my Lord's pretended regard for Christianity, is varnished over a second violation of his laws, Bacchus, and Venus, are recalled to a new apotheosis under a christian æra;

14 On INFIDELITY.

æra; and receive daily sacrifice in the fortunes, health, and common dignity of man.

Desires, and appetites, were not given us out of tyranny, but with an intention doubly kind; as a means both of Pleasure, and Virtue, if gratified, and restrained, as religion directs. In both views they are blessings, but greatest in the last; yet an *Esau* will ever be for preferring the former.

Thus you see, Sir, that both the tables of the Decalogue are broken, in a more terrible sense, than they were by Moses, at his descent from the mount: and from no dissimilar cause. The sufficiency of human reason is the golden calf which these men set up to be worshipped; and in the fren-

On INFIDELITY. 15

frenzies of their extravagant devotion to it, they trample on venerable authority; strike at an Oak with an Osier; the doctrine of God's own planting, and the growth of ages, with the suddain, and fortuitous, shoots of imagination; abortive births of an hour. These human improvements on divine revelation may be compared to the prophaning the holy Bible with the figures of heathen idols, under *Antiochus Epiphanes*; or rather, to the proud *Roman* emperor, who took the head from Jupiter's statue, and placed his own in its stead. These are bold men; but the boldest, we hope, may be reclaimed. That almighty finger which wrote the divine laws twice in stone, cannot want power to give them a new impression in their apostate hearts.

16 *On* INFIDELITY.

And that they may the more willingly receive that impression, I shall observe, that, setting aside the immoral consequences of Infidelity, *Faith* is necessary on its own account, without relation to any thing else. Faith is not only a means of obeying, but a principal act of obedience. It is not only a needful foundation; it is not only as an altar, on which to sacrifice; but it is a sacrifice itself; and, perhaps, of all the greatest. It is a submission of our understandings, an oblation of our idoliz'd reason, to God; which he requires so indispensably, that our whole will, and affections, tho' seemingly a larger sacrifice, will not, without it, be received at our hands.

Does any question this? His Lordship's disciples will be very apt to question

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sion it; yet this is true: for it was not an attestation of their doctrine, but their faith, for which the blessed Apostles were persecuted, and the Martyrs shed their blood; which they might easily have avoided, if they had insisted only on the moral precepts of their new dispensation. Their moral precepts were approved, and welcomed, by the wisest on earth. Nay, our Infidels compliment them, especially when they would give themselves the more weight in their opposition to our Creed; yet, possibly, they had rather subscribe that absurd creed, than stand obliged to practise that morality, which they so much commend.

To renounce, or corrupt, the faith
(one, or both of which is my Lord's
point) abstracted from libertine gra-

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tifica-

18 *On* INFIDELITY.

tifications to follow, or to get rid of fear from those past ; there seems to be so little temptation, that I should think none would venture on it, but thro' ignorance of its guilt. Its guilt therefore I have pointed out ; which shews that modern Deism, how laudable soever the Deist's life is, is criminal in itself. A virtuous life, rising from a corrupted faith, is as an Angel of light supported by a cloven foot ; which many seem not to believe, otherwise they would not be so often pleading the virtue of Deists, as a full absolution of that sect : whereas we are expressly told, that the *Just shall live by Faith* ; that is, even the Just shall not live, that is, be saved, without it.

But tho' a corrupt faith is sufficiently criminal in itself, yet its guilt
rarely

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rarely rests there; it often produces an irregular life. On the contrary, vicious practice is sure to produce a corrupt faith; or, an absolute renunciation of all belief: for the notices of good and ill are so fairly imprinted on our nature, and the practice of them is so strongly guarded by consequent hope and fear, that no conscience is so harden'd, as to sin without the shelter of some pretence. The guilty hush conscience with such soft whispers as these; either, Heaven takes not such cognizance of our actions; or, is not so much concern'd about them, as some imagine; or, its mercy will not suffer it to be just; or, its justice will not suffer it to be so severe, as to punish temporal guilt with eternal pain: all which are corruptions of the faith. Or if these opiates will not do, they proceed to re-

20 *On* INFIDELITY.

nounce the faith. They give themselves a quite-quieting draught of absolute unbelief: A Deity is a dream, and Religion a cheat. And thus they throw off their fears, their God, and common sense, together; and are deplorably gay, till they are irremediably undone. How happy might such wretches be, if they knew what a trifle *pleasure* is to peace! A very trifle is it, even when pleasure is innocent: but when not; when pleasure is an enemy to peace; then, then indeed, it is a trifle no more.

There is a text which must give some surprize to those who doubt whether a bad life occasions a *false*, or *no* belief. It is said, there *must* be heresies, that is, false beliefs. And why? There is certainly no fatal necessity for them, from God's destination

On INFIDELITY. 21

nation—No; but there is a moral necessity for them from man's corruption. A heart boiling with violent and vicious passions, will send up infatuating fumes to the head; and a delirious giddiness of head will make a man fall into the grossest mistakes, be his natural abilities what they will. A lewd and obstinate will fails not to blind the strongest judgment, as *Delilah* the man of might.

Many, even of those that hold fast the Faith, may perhaps not have observed, that Faith is *doubly* precious; it is our Duty, and our Refuge; nay, it is *doubly* our refuge, It rescues our passions from flaming into vice; and it rescues our understanding from darkening into errors. The same qualification which is necessary for us in order to please God, is as necessary

22 *On* INFIDELITY.

to secure ourselves from imposture ; and not only from such impostures as Others may prepare for us, but from our Own. It is our sole security against our framing impositions to deceive our own judgments (as shewn above), as well as against our incurring crimes to defeat our own salvation.

As to the mysterious articles of our faith, which Infidels would by no means have me forget ; “ Who,” say they, “ can swallow them ? ” In truth, none but those who think it no dishonour to their understandings to credit their Creator. *Sacinus*, like our Infidels, was one of a narrow throat ; and, out of generous compassion to the Scriptures (which the World, it seems, had misunderstood for 1500 years) was for weeding them

On INFIDELITY. 23

them of their mysteries ; and rendering them, in the plenitude of his infallible reason, undisgusting, and palatable to all the *rational* part of mankind. Why should honest Jews and Turks be frightened from us by the Trinity? He was for making Religion familiar and inoffensive. And so he did ; and unchristian too. Those things which our hands can grasp, our understandings cannot comprehend. Why then deny to the Deity Himself the privilege of being one, amidst that multitude of mysteries which He has made?

Here let me observe, what perhaps has escaped your notice, with regard to the blessed Trinity, which gives our unbelievers the greatest offence. The *Revelation* of it is not only necessary for our understanding the foundation of Christianity, but is

24 *On* INFIDELITY.

also, I conceive, an absolute demonstration of its truth. Because it is a mystery which by *Nature* could not possibly have entered into the imagination of man; which they, who most explode it, confess, by their obstinate rejection of it. For why do they reject it, but on that very account? Our opponents therefore, in some measure, support us in our attachment to this supreme article of our Creed, which they most condemn; and (what is somewhat remarkable in favour of our faith) support us in it by the very cause for which it is condemned by them.

Mysteries, that is, those great and hidden things of our religion, whose truth we are assured of by Divine authority, but the manner of their Being surpasses our understanding: such as the Plurality of Persons in
the

ON INFIDELITY, 25

the Divine Unity : God manifest in the flesh : the operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers : the spiritual presence of Christ in the Eucharist : the uniting our scatter'd parts from the dust of death. All which the Scriptures have expressly delivered as catholic truths. Several of these, several heretics have rejected ; and the *Socinians* have, in a manner, rejected them all. Faith in These is more acceptable to God, than faith in less abstruse articles of our religion ; because it pays that honour which is due to his testimony ; and the more seemingly incredible the matter is which we believe, the more respect we shew to the relator. This (putting in a *Caveat* against the ridicule of infidels) may be called *Heroic* faith, correspondent to heroic virtue, at which, out of prudence, they must smile.

This

26 *On* INFIDELITY.

This heroic faith may be more *acceptable* to God (some may say); but, sure, not more *useful* to man. It may have a good influence on *another* life; but what account does *This* find in it? Who can shew me the *moral* effects of it?—From faith in these mysteries, man necessarily, and more justly, adores the incomprehensible Majesty of God; and more justly and perfectly contemplates his own littleness, and disproportion of thought to those truths that are vouchsafed to his faith. Hence he heartily renders God a due honour for his testimony; and a due acknowledgement of his professed care of his Church; and a due thankfulness for the mercy of his Revelation. He renders a due obedience to his proper government, as a Christian, that is, the authority of the Church; and

On INFIDELITY. 27

and a due assistance to the public peace, which is never safely built but on unity of judgment. And as to his *private* virtue, he keeps in due subjection the Pride of Understanding, that most vicious affection of the mind, which, if let loose, would be attended with a multitude of evils; and with one in particular, which occasions this Letter. But tho' we could see none of these temporal advantages, yet would it be most reasonable in us to believe; unless we, who think it right to believe implicitly in those on whom our fortune depends, think it wrong to believe implicitly in Him, on whom depends our Salvation.

But there is, I confess, some error, on our own part, with regard to mysteries. We, perhaps, have given
some

28 *On* INFIDELITY.

some small excuse for our Infidels contempt of mysteries, by more pious, than prudent, attempts, that have been sometimes made toward an explanation of them. A mystery explain'd, is a mystery destroy'd: for what is a mystery, but a thing not known? But things not known may reasonably be believed; in the very strangest things there may be truth; and in things most credible, a lie.

It is with our understandings as with our eyes. Both have their mysteries: both have objects beyond their reach; some accidentally, some absolutely. We see not those objects that are placed in an obscure light, because there is a defect in the medium: we see not those that are vested with too much light, because there is a weakness in the sensory, unable

unable to sustain such strong impressions. Thus it is with the objects of our understanding: some things we know not, from want of being duly inform'd. Salvation was a mystery to the Gentiles; but ceased so to be, when revealed by the Gospel. Other things we know not, because they exceed the measure of our comprehension. Thus, some articles of our faith are such mysteries, as by no revelation can cease to be so. They must be mysteries, while men are men; while yet unblest'd with powers that are not indulged to this imperfect state. As it is bold and vain, so, perhaps, it has ever been prejudicial to the truth, to labour at rational evictions of sacred mysteries; for, by these means, men attempt to comprehend the divine nature, by putting it under some injurious disguise; as
we

30 *On* INFIDELITY.

we venture to gaze at the Sun, after we have watch'd it into a cloud.

God forbad images of Himself, because it is impossible that any sensible representations could do otherwise than derogate from Him that is invisible : nor can the diminishing imagery of our notions derogate less from Him that is incomprehensible. I presume not to censure those who have made use of illustrations to the proper ends of piety ; all I mean, is, that fallible ratiocination should not be made the grounds of faith, whose proper basis is infallible testimony. Nor is it longer faith than while it rests on that ; for when I believe, not so much what is revealed, as what my own reason pronounces to be true ; I believe not God, but myself. I assume, not obey ; and give
proof

On INFIDELITY. 31

proof rather of the pride, than humiliation, of my reason ; whereas its humiliation is a principal end aimed at by God's so strict demand of our faith.

And, indeed, far from humiliation, and even common modesty, must he be, who would give light to those mysteries which St. Paul, with all his learning, eloquence, and inspiration, pronounced to be to the Jews a stumbling-block ; and to the Greeks, those most subtle of men, foolishness : That is, they thought it folly to believe them, because unintelligible ; and because they did not apprehend, that there was any divine authority to compel their belief. And such Greeks have we ; Epicurean Greeks, subtle, and unbelieving ; and
whose

32 OF INPRIDEBITY.

whose celebrated writings are of equal authority with

*Quicquid Græcia mendax
Audet in historia.* Juv.

Men, who reject divine assistance, as too officious, with a sort of disdain, as if it affronted their own abilities; and whose presumptuous opinions are industriously spread, by pest-men, thro' the land.

With the gross and horrid effects of such opinions, and their consequences, the distemper'd age groans, and kingdoms shake, and judgments threaten. And well they may. How many private families have their infamous secrets? How many public transactions their barefaced iniquity? High courts of justice have their *jus datum*

On INFIDELITY. 33

datum sceleri, and blush not to plead precedent for the violation of their own laws; and the corruption of the times, for more corruption still? Is not this heaping mountain upon mountain against Heaven? And think we, Heaven will never return the blow?

We have had already, nay now have, some light and merciful admonitions from Heaven. But can it be thought, that an age of judgments, and pastimes; of riots, and distresses; of excessive debts, and excessive expence; of public poverty, and private accumulation; of new sects in religion, and new fallies in sin; and every other contradiction to common sense, does not call for more? I, Sir, am fasten'd in the country; nor know I much of that larger and
E fouler

34 *On* INFIDELITY.

fouler sink of debauchery, in which you breathe. But even here, I know too much. Where is that village that has not its Suicides of intemperance; or its bold adventurers for still quicker death from the hand of public justice? And, to confirm that opinion above advanced, of the close tie and mutual growth of vice and unbelief, almost every cottage can afford us one that has *corrupted*, and every palace one that has *renounced*, the faith.

I know, Sir, you will tell me, that it is the business of our common Piety, to deplore; of our Prayers, to obstruct; and of our Lives, rather than our Harangues, to confute them. True; for if our Christianity is to be found no-where but in our books, the Christian, and Infidel, may drop their

their disputes. A Tillotson, and a Bolingbroke, are on the same side: their contest is but verbal; their agreement is essential, and their association will prove eternal.

But, Sir, it is our duty to speak and write (if we can), as well as live, against the enemies of our Christian faith. I proceed therefore to observe, that the Viscount's arguments against the authority of the Scriptures have been long since answer'd. But he is not without precedent in this point. This repetition of already refuted arguments seems to be a deistical privilege, or distemper, from which few of them are free. Even Echoes of Echoes are to be found amongst them: which evidently shews, that they write not to discover Truth, but to spread Infection; which old poi-

36 *On* INFIDELITY.

son re-administred will do, as well as new; and it will be struck deeper into the constitution, by repeating the same dose. Besides, new writers will have new readers. The book may fall into hands untainted before; or, the already-infected may swallow it more greedily in a new vehicle; or, they that were disgusted with it in one vehicle, may relish it in another. I therefore ask pardon: what I mis-called Distemper, I find, on second thoughts, is perfect Prudence: but such prudence as, with Them, would throw a christian writer into the bottom of contempt.

There are more reasons for our Deists to be dissatisfy'd with themselves than those already given. *Infidels* is an opprobrious name: but time was, when *Deism* was the true religion;

gion; and they are for still retaining the credit once due to that character. It is therefore fit for a friend to Christianity, nor less fit for a friend to Them, to take notice, that it is impossible for a *good* man, that is, one aiming at the Divine favour above all things, to reject an offer'd Revelation, without inquiring into its title to the high character it assumes; and, that it is as impossible for a *reasonable* man to reject the Christian Revelation, if he *does* inquire. He, therefore, who continues a Deist, in a land enlighten'd by the Gospel, must be wanting in Goodness, or Reason; must be either criminal, or dull. None, therefore, can be more mistaken than they, that profess Deism, for the credit of superior understanding, or for the sake of exercising a more pure, and per-

38 *On* INFIDELITY.

fect, virtue. Yet these are the only pretences which they do, or dare, avow, for their fatal choice. Must not then their real motive be of a nature which they think prudent to conceal?

But to conceal it, is not easy: for *Reason*, our defective reason, in many points of the last moment to man, wants, wishes, calls for a *Revelation*; and cannot but accept, when offer'd, what it calls for: that is, reasonable Deists cannot but become Christians, where the Gospel shines.

Or argue thus (for it admits of various proof): God Almighty would not have made a Revelation, but in order to be received. And by whom received? doubtless, by the Reasonable, and Good. And if by some of them,

ON INFIDELITY. 39

them, why not by all? And if all the reasonable, and good, receive it; what must they be that reject it? Therefore Revealed religion rejected, proves Natural religion disobey'd. I said, above, that Deists were blameable, how good soever their lives might be: But *now* it appears, that their lives cannot be good. Others, perhaps, have forbore speaking so plain, out of charity. I venture on it out of what I conceive to be charity greater still: for nothing that can awaken them can be kindly suppressed.

Cornelius, the Centurion, tho' one of the best of men, thought not the belief of the Gospel unnecessary to his salvation. But modern Deists, wiser, tho' not better than he, have their objections to the Gospel. Their

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chief

40. *On INFIDELITY.*

chief objection is against its *mysteries*. There is nothing mysterious, but with regard to things, which we either *can not*, or *need not*, understand. *Can not*, thro' the limitation of the human intellect; or *need not*, thro' the sufficiency of other means, and motives, for our leading good lives. To what amounts, then, this capital objection, and charge against it? To no more than this, *viz.* That Christianity performs not what it is impossible to perform: for it is as impossible for its Author, Almighty God, to do more than is needful for his gracious end, *viz.* the good lives of mankind; as to do what, in its nature, is impossible to be done.

Indeed, all their objections to Christianity seem to be no more, nor less, than playing the best card they have;

ON INFIDELITY. 41

have; then using the best expedient they can think of; to keep themselves in countenance, and the world in the dark, as to the true motive of their apostasy. Nor are their objections to be look'd on, in those that are men of sense, as an argument of their disbelief, but their dislike. They wish not the mysteries removed; for that would rob them of a favourite objection. They wish not the darkness of the mysteries removed, but transferr'd; transferr'd from the *Doctrines*, to the *moral Precepts*. These are without a cloud; these are too plain for their purpose. None ever fully complied with these, but was easily reconciled to the mysteries of the Gospel. The disgusted, despotic heart commands the passive-obedient head, to fight its unjust quarrel, and say it is its own:

So

42 ON INFIDELITY.

So that *Satan* may blame them for some degree of hypocrisy in his favour; may blame them for only pretending to disbelieve. If, on the other hand, Christians were not also hypocrites; hypocrites, I mean, as to practice; they would rob the Deists of their most plausible plea against us; and either lessen their numbers, or increase their shame.

I hope that some of the Deists; at least, some of those whose principles are endanger'd by them; may admit some little impression from what has been offer'd. I hope they may discern, and own the *self-accusation* which is, evidently, imply'd in our Deists renunciation of Christianity: or, if I am mistaken, that they will set me right; for if I have wrong'd them, I have wrong'd them much.

For,

On INFIDELITY. 43

For, in what a disadvantageous light appear these deserters from Christianity in these pages? A *Deistical* tongue, a *Christian* conscience, and a partly *Pagan* heart! What a sad composition is this? It is a far heavier charge than I wish to find true.

But it is a natural question, “How
“ comes it to pass, that men of parts
“ should so much disaffect the Scrip-
“ tures, so admirable, and still more
“ and more admirable, in propor-
“ tion to the discernment of their
“ reader?”

Can it be from *Ignorance*? It may be so, if their hearts are worse than their heads; for there are parts of Scripture which none but a good man can well understand: “Re-
“ joice always; and again I say, Re-
“ joice.”

44 *On* INFIDELITY.

“joice.” This must appear to the Vicious absurd, because impracticable, and therefore un-inspired. To rejoice in tribulation, they have neither cause, nor power. Thus, bad manners, almost necessarily, render men Infidels to holy writ. On the contrary, a good life is a key to the Scriptures. “The secret of the Lord” “is with those that fear him.” A text this, as unintelligible to the Vicious as the former. As he has had no Experience, so neither has he any Comprehension of its truth. The good man comprehends, and *feels* it too. Thus the Scripture, like the cloudy pillar which it records, is Light to the true *Israelite*, but Darkness to the *Egyptians*. Hence acutest understandings in religious debates often lose their edge.

Can

ON INFIDELITY. 45

Can that cause we seek, be *Vanity*? It may be said of the Viscount's writings as of *Catiline*, *Satis eloquentiæ, sapientiæ parum*. Had his eloquence been less; had those talents been deny'd him which flatter'd him with hope of shining a first lustre in the letter'd world, he had escaped a temptation which has evidently been too hard for his prudence; and a common-siz'd head had, probably, left his heart in safety. So formidable a possession is an immortal pen (if his *is* immortal); a pen more fatal to its master, than *Cato's* sword.

Or, might not *Envy* be the cause we seek? "But can these men envy
 "Christians, whom they quit on ac-
 "count of their unhappy mistake?"
 Man is not only desirous, but ambitious too, of happiness. He but ill
 bears

46 On INFIDELITY.

bears that another should be happier than himself ; because superior Happiness is a natural argument of superior Wisdom or Worth. The man of a libertine life knows that the good Christian, if his religion is true, is, on the whole, much happier than himself. Therefore he wishes it to be false ; and endeavours to find it so. And strong endeavours to be in the wrong, Heaven will punish with success. It will permit them to believe their own Lye ; that is, to fall on their own sword, which was drawn against the Truth.

Non hos quæsitum munus in usus. Virg.

And I am the more inclined to impute their opposition to *Envy*, rather than *Vanity* ; because pure Vanity is consistent with Good-nature ;
and

On INFIDELITY. 47

and may be a very candid thing :
But Envy has Bitterness, and Ill-will ;
and Ridicule is the genuine child of
ill-nature ; Ridicule, that offensive
brat of which they are so fond.

Now tho' nothing is more improper in important debates than Rail-
lery ; yet can I make some apology
for them. They may, possibly, per-
ceive, that the load on their own mis-
giving consciences, would sink them,
were it not for the light expedient of
forced mirth, like a bladder filled
with wind, to keep them above wa-
ter : and that they, sometimes, have
their doubts, and misgivings of heart,
it is reasonable to believe. To give
full-established security is the incom-
municable gift of the Gospel.

For
Lars

48 *On* INFIDELITY.

For the reasons above, I venture to set down *Envy* among the causes of Infidelity, tho' (I think) by others overlook'd. And further, I believe it to be a *very principal* cause of letter'd Infidelity in the world. Other, but not greater vices are, doubtless, the chief cause of Infidelity in lower, and illiterate, life; where sense has no rival in thought, but tyrannizes alone.

But whatever is the cause of their Infidelity, be it *Ignorance*, *Vanity*, *Envy*, or any other vice, it will naturally have some effect in our favour. It is much to be hoped, that it will put us on our guard, and make us better men. Our leading a bad life, is playing into their hands. It is giving them an argument in the debate, against ourselves. Tho' the argument is bad, yet is it an argument still.

On INFIDELITY. 49

still. And since they have none *but* bad arguments, and such they *will* make use of, we should not increase the number. That is like furnishing them with ammunition to protract the war : and tho' the war protracted will not hurt us, yet will it hurt them ; and, as we are Christians, *that* should give us equal concern.

Secondly, Christianity may thank its *Opponents* for much new light, from time to time, thrown in on the sublime excellence of its nature, and the manifestation of its truth : *Opponents*, in some sort, more welcome than its *Friends* ; as they do it signal service without running [it in debt ; and have no demand on our gratitude for the favours they confer. The stronger its adversaries, the greater its triumph : the more it is disputed,

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the

50 On INFIDELITY.

the more indisputably will it shine.
With what pious pleasure must you
see the brightest talents striking at it,
with the most hearty good-will, yet
dropping harmless, like old Priam's
spear?

*Telum imbellè sine ictu
Conjecit; rauco quod protenus ære re-
pulsum;
Et summo Clypei necquicquam umbone
pendit.* Virg.

Christianity, that great support of
man's welfare, and God's glory,
like a well-built arch, the greater
load of opposition, and reproach, its
enemy lays on it, the stronger it
stands.

Thirdly, Their antichristian write-
ings may detect them: for since (as
shewn above) a false faith, or no
faith

On INFIDELITY. 51

faith at all, is the natural consequence of a bad life, it is possible that the Gentlemen in the opposition, while they are giving us their opinions, may be giving us more: May be discovering their *Morals*; while they mean only to teach us their *Creed*; and, thus, may carry, like *Bellerophon*, their own condemnation, while they imagine they are, graciously, conveying intelligence, and new light, to mankind: So that the old Proverb, *Bellerophontis Litteræ*, may be a proper Motto for the learned Labours of them all.

But condemnation from others will be much more supportable than their own; if that should fall on them. And where is he on whom it shall not one day fall? If a man born blind, who had never so much as heard of

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fun,

52 *On* INFIDELITY.

sun, moon, and stars, should suddenly receive sight ; he would not be more astonished at the first rushing in of those material glories, than would the man, by vice struck blind to Religion, be, at his first conviction of heavenly truths, *viz.* divine Manifestations, awful Revelations, fulfilled Prophecies, numberless Miracles ; and one unbroken chain of marvellous Expedients, from before creation to this hour, for our Salvation ; those spiritual luminaries ; those (dare I say ?) sun, moon, and stars, of the moral world ; if God should give him light. Till then, walking in darkness, he must mistake Danger for Safety, Shame for Glory, and Mischief for Pleasure. Like the blinded of *Sodom*, he reaches eagerly after, and presses hard for, enjoyment ; but of real enjoyment,
of

On INFIDELITY. 53

of true felicity, he cannot find the door ; as I propose shewing in my next.

If some part of it may seem too severe, I must observe, that no man can strike fire with a feather. A fire elemental is diffused thro' all nature, tho' lock'd up in dark matter, and unapparent in most parts of our globe. Thus, I conceive, that there is Divine Grace spread through all hearts (where not entirely quenched), tho' unactive, and dormant in them. No slight animadversion can awake it. It must be a blow of some force, that strikes it out of a heart of flint. And such there must be in these days of darkness, when few sparks of Grace are apparent. Such there *must* be when Infidelity prevails ; for Infidelity, and Faith, are

54 *On* INFIDELITY.

the Day, and Night, of the moral world. One reveals, the other hides, Heaven from our thoughts. Happy am I, if this Letter shall occasion the smallest dawn on but one single heart, in this our grand Eclipse. With you, dear Sir, the dawn is long since past ; and that you may continue in the light, till Heaven, at that knock of *Faith* which only will be heard, shall admit you into perfect Day, where *undisputed* Truth, and *unmistaken* Pleasure, with endless Glory, crown the Just : This is the Prayer of

Your Affectionate

Humble Servant.

L E T.



L E T T E R II.

O N

P L E A S U R E.



F 4




L E T T E R II.

O N

P L E A S U R E.

Dear Sir,


 Now proceed to say something of Pleasure; that subject which you so warmly recommend; not aware, I believe, that it may be long before men, whose faults set the public eye at defiance, will learn to blush when alone in their closets. And till then,

I what

58 *On* PLEASURE.

what hope of much reformation from the Pen? Besides, tho' our transgressions with regard to Pleasure are great; yet they are not new. To the scandal of the Antediluvians be it spoken, there were British iniquities before the flood. To such a degree have all moral subjects been exhausted, that it is difficult for a writer on them not to *repeat*, tho' he is no Plagiary. But your desires are an apology for my deficiencies in compliance with them.

Whether we are more hardened in Infidelity, or softened in Pleasure, may be disputed: but none can deny that the Love of Pleasure is the root of every crime. Theft, Murder, Perjury, are a few of its fatal fruits; nor the worst. But I shall not dip so deep in its consequences; yet

yet deep enough to render the name of a *Man of Pleasure*, which some affect for their honour, not only ridiculous, but detestable.

What an extravagant dominion does *Pleasure* exercise over us? It is not only the Pestilence that walketh in darkness; but an Arrow that destroyeth at noon-day. The Moon hides her face at our midnight enormities; and the Morning blushes on our unfinish'd debauch. I am almost tempted to say that our impudent folly puts Nature out of countenance. But there is no need by words to exaggerate the fatal truth. Our Luxury is beyond example, and beyond bounds; it stops not at the poor: even they that live on alms are infected with it.

It

60 *On PLEASURE.*

It has often been observed, that it is with States, as with Men. They have their birth, growth, health, distemper, decay, and Death. Men sometimes drop suddenly by an apoplexy ; States, by conquest ; in full vigor, both. As man owes his mortality to original sin ; some States owe their fall to some defect, or infelicity, in their original constitution. But contracted distemper is the most common ruin of States, and men. And what national distemper more mortal than our own ? On the soft beds of Luxury most kingdoms have expired.

If causes should not fail of their usual effect ; if our national distemper, far from being cutaneous at present, should reach the vitals of our State ; how applicable to this opulent,

On PLEASURE. 61

lent, proud, profligate Metropolis, (which calls the sea her own, and whose vices, more diffusive, are without a shore) would be the Prophet's sacred dirge over antient Tyre; whose sea-born wealth, and hell-born iniquity, let it not be said, was but a prelude to our own? And yet if we proceed in our infernal career, that most infamous reproach may become but too true.

The sublime, and most memorable words run thus; and I cannot but think that, at present, they must have a formidable sound in a British ear. “ Is this the joyous city? whose
“ antiquity is of days remote? whose
“ merchants were Princes, and her
“ traffickers the Honourable of the
“ earth? whose revenue was the harvest of rivers? and her exchange
“ the

62 *On* PLEASURE.

“ the mart of nations ? who sat as
“ a Queen ; stretched out her hand
“ over the seas ; and shook the king-
“ doms ? But she is fallen ! she is
“ fallen ! Heaven has stained the
“ pride of all glory. How sorely
“ must you be pained at the re-
“ port ? ”

Has not Britain reason to be more deeply struck with this part of Scripture than the rest of mankind ? The Prophecy as yet, indeed, thro' mercy, is unfulfilled in us : but if Britain continues, like Tyre,--“ To sing as
“ a Harlot ; to take the Harp ; to
“ make sweet melody ; sing many
“ songs ; turn to her hire ; and
“ commit fornication with all the
“ kingdoms of the world, ”---her fall is to be feared, unless the fate of most former empires betray us into
mistake ;

mistake; and that national poison which has ever prov'd mortal, is mortal no more. If the fate of kingdoms is lodged in a just, and impartial hand, what but the grossest self-flattery can banish our fears? And if our fears are banish'd, leave it not unobserved, that our very want of fear is a proof of our danger: for Heaven infatuates, when it determines to destroy.

“ But such a general face of
“ affluence, and gaiety, Are these
“ signs of ruin?” Not signs only,
but causes of it too. Not Babylon
alone has been smitten at a banquet,
and perished in its joys. Most na-
tions have been gayest, when nearest
to their end; and, like a taper in
the socket, have blazed, as they ex-
pired.

64 *On PLEASURE.*

Were our fathers to rise from their graves, they would conceive that their fortune had thrown them on some day of public festivity, nor imagine that every day was drunk of the same disease. By our gaiety, we seem to celebrate the perpetual triumph of the Millennium; by our vices, to add to it the manners of the antediluvian world; and, by our security under them, to put full confidence in the divine promise that the world shall be drowned no more. If with the vices of the antediluvians, we had their years too, more might be said in our excuse: but to weigh such a moment against Eternity, shews that the ballance is in very weak hands. The world, which the divine vengeance swept away for its enormities was incapable of so great a guilt.

But

But in so general a dissolution of manners, are there none that stand intitled to more particular blame? Are not our great Patrons of luxury a sort of anti-Curtii, who leap into the gulph for the ruin of their country? Their country's ruin they threaten by the malignity of their example ; while by the profusion of their expence they nearly finish their own. What a weakness is self-denial? what idle self-tormentors are Penitents? what wretched lunatics, or gross suicides, are the noble army of martyrs, if these men are in the right? How cheap would their Pleasures come, if they cost them nothing more than their health, credit, and estates?

Pleasure is in some sort more pernicious than direct vice. Vice has, naturally, some horror in it. It

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startles,

66 Oⁿ PLEASURE.

startles, and alarms the conscience, and puts us on our guard. Pleasure, under the colour of being harmless, has an opiate in it; it stupefies and besots. In the soft lap of Pleasure conscience falls asleep. Vice, losing its horror, becomes familiar. And as Vice increases, some expedient becomes necessary to reconcile us to ourselves. Thus, looking out for some shadow of excuse, we naturally slide into groundless doubts, and become Infidels out of pure self-defence.

And, as Pleasure makes us Infidels, by stupefying the conscience; so it makes us very bad husbands of temporal enjoyments, by darkening our understandings; and thus unqualifies us for the very point to which alone we pretend.

It

ON PLEASURE. 67

It is this cloud on their understanding which hinders our Voluptuaries from discerning, that their blind rage for Pleasure turns blessings into their reverse. Birth, Education, and Abundance, are great blessings; but, abused by Pleasure into motives and instruments of indulgence, Birth is more ignoble than Obscurity; Knowledge is more pernicious than Ignorance; and Abundance more a misfortune than Want. Men of Rank (and of such I speak) if wrong, can scarce avoid sinning beyond themselves. How pestilential their example falls on the lower world, which, under the welcome force of such illustrious authority, turn dissolute, as much for the sake of their credit, and fortune, as of their lusts; pride, and interest, bringing needless succour to loose desire; and Tyburn has

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68 On PLEASURE.

sometimes reap'd, what Assemblies have sown, Great men in the wrong, are powerful engines of mischief, and, like bursting bombs, destroy themselves, and all around them.

And as to the two supreme blessings, and glories of man, their Reason, and Immortality ; these, as they manage it, flame out into vengeance too great to be mentioned without horror. Their Reason serves only to render them more guilty ; and their Immortality to render endless the sad wages of their guilt.

It is this cloud on our understanding which makes us so little masters in the very science we profess. Happiness is our study, but are we not Dunces in it? We know not, or seem not to know, that all *real* enjoyment

On PLEASURE. 69

lies within the compass of God's commands ; which abridge not, but defend them : that when we dip too deep in Pleasure, we stir a sediment, that renders it impure, and noxious : that (as much a paradox as it may seem) the best means of arriving at the true pleasures of the body, is to preserve, and cultivate, the powers of the soul ; and that a good understanding is, in man, the source, and security, of mere animal delight.

Let these gentlemen take notice that I am not against Enjoyment ; I am as great a Lover of it, as they ; for without a relish of the good things of life, we cannot be thankful. Enjoy, but enjoy reasonably, and thankfully to the great Donor ; that will secure us from excess. To *enjoy*, is our Wisdom, and our *Duty* ; it is

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the

70 *On* PLEASURE

the great Lesson of human life ; but a Lesson which few have learned ; and none less than *These*, who proclaim themselves *Masters of Arts* in it.

It is this Pleasure-bred cloud on the understanding, which makes us forget, that Virtue is the Health of the Soul : that all provision, and parade from without can make a Sensualist just as happy, as the same can make an Invalid : that both have pains adhering, necessarily, to their present state : that both have rather Remedies, than Joys : that Assemblies, Balls, Masquerades, &c. are but as well-stor'd Hospitals, unnecessary to the sound ; and but poor palliatives to the sick : tho' pretenders to more than health, they confess our distemper ; and, what is worse,

in-

increase the distemper they confess: and that of distempers the worst, a wrong judgment in our most important point.

I grant, that in the boundless field of Licentiousness, some bastard joys may rise, that look gay, more especially at a distance; but they soon wither. No joys are always sweet, and flourish long, but such as have self-approbation for their root, and the divine favour for their shelter. We are for rootless joys, joys beyond appetite; which is the sole root of sensual delight. We are for joys, not of man's native growth, but forced up by luxurious art; dung'd by great expence; and shone on, not by the divine favour, but a strong imagination, which gives them all their little taste; and makes them apt, like

-m G 4 other

other crude fruits, to surfeit, and de-
 stroy. We are, in a word, for joys
 of our own creation, the seeds of
 which Heaven never sowed in our
 hearts. But we may as well invade
 another prerogative of Heaven, and,
 with the tyrant of *Elis*, pretend to
 make thunder and lightning, as
real joy. I say *real* joy, Joy we
 may make, but not Chearfulness.
 Joy may subsist, without thought;
 Chearfulness rises from it. Joy is
 from the Pulse; Chearfulness from
 the Heart. That may give a mo-
 mentary flash of Pleasure; This alone
 makes a happy man. And happy
 men there may be, who never
 laughed in their lives: and in a
 situation, where reason calls for the
 reverse, there is not in nature so me-
 lancholy a thing as Joy.

It is not in the power of the human mind to

It

It is this intellectual cloud, which hangs, like a fog, over every every gay resort of our *moral* Invalids (tho' invisible to common eyes), which flings us not only into mistakes, but contradictions. How sick are we of Yesterday? yet how fond of To-morrow, tho' devoted to the same cheat as the past? Which flings us into contradictions not only in Reason; but contradictions to Sense. We can't believe that fatigue, is fatigue; let its cause be what it will. Too much Recreation tires as much, as too much Business; yet one we swallow; are choaked by the other. The man of business has, at least, his seventh day's rest. Our fever for Folly never intermits. Our week has no sabbath in it. So much harder is the master whom we serve; than that of better men; and yet, to our infamous

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most honour be it spoken, we are better servants than They. How do we run, labour, expend; expose ourselves, hurt our families, resist unbounded, eternal, temptations to wisdom; offer up the rich sacrifice of conscience, and understanding; watch; watch late; and all, but pray, for his service? Quite jaded with protracted amusements, we yawn over them. The dull Drone of nominal diversion still humming on, when the short Tune of enjoyment is over, lulls us quite asleep. Like the Bear in the Fable, we hug our darling to death. Instead of rejoicing in tribulation (of which few amongst us ever heard), we sorrow in delight; for, to speak the truth (tho' we would not have it divulg'd), we tread this eternal round of vanities, less, for the pleasure it brings, than for the pain

it suspends. It is a Refuge, not a
 Friend. Like criminals (as we are)
 we fly to it from our much-injur'd,
 unforgiving foes, from ourselves;
 which chide, and sting us, when
 alone; when together, we support
 each others spirits; which is like sail-
 ors clinging to each other for safety,
 when the vessel is sinking. We fly
 ourselves, because we first fly from
 our Maker. Wretched Flight! Hell
 is nothing but an intire absence from
 Him; and every partial departure
 has its proportion of it.

But those deep draughts of Plea-
 sure which besot us, must answer for
 all absurdities; and, among the rest,
 for our intire ignorance of the nature
 of that world in which we live. Mirth
 at a funeral is scarce more indecent,
 and unnatural, than a perpetual
 flight

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flight of gaiety, and burst of exultation, in a world like this: a world, which may seem a Paradise to fools, but is an Hospital with the wise; a world, in which bare Escape is a prime Felicity. *Effugere est Triumphus.*

The numberless pains of body, and mind; the dark, solemn approaches to, or dismal vestibules of, the grave, as well as opening graves themselves, are so thick scatter'd over the face of the whole earth, that an unpetrified heart can't look round, without feeling an inevitable damp, and general disconsolation; and venting a sigh universal for the whole family of *Adam*, for the lot of all mankind. Nothing but strong faith in eternal life could hinder tears from bursting forth it: Nor are Tears too much; for

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for Sympathy is the chief duty of human life.

Were one tenth part of the wretchedness *seen*, that is *felt*, it would strike us with horror. Heaven means to make one half of the species a moral lecture to the other. It surrounds us with deplorable objects, not more for the sake of the wretched, than for our own; that our compassion awaken'd, may awaken our prudence; and teach us what we have *to do*, by shewing us what we have *to fear*. Shall the Rich, and the Well-educated, throw their abundance down the sink of unprofitable, and untasted delights, while untaught multitudes mistake, and sin; and indigent multitudes shiver, and starve? While we think we are sparing expences, we are running in debt. How deep

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deep are we in arrears to the distressed? The distressed have, from Reason, as just a demand on our superfluities, as we have, from Law, on our stewards for our estates. But this is no *Blay-debt*, and therefore, without dishonour, undischarg'd.

Is then my repeated censure of intellectual darkness too severe? I wish it were. But, alas! how distant from their thoughts are the points the most important? How foreign to their interest, all that is nearest to their hearts? When I speak of their darkness, I do not forget my own. There is not that man on earth that does not well deserve censure, and even from them. But there is difference in deviation from the right: *Mulattas* are not *Ethiopians*. I grant in their excuse; that, tho' all can see
folly

ON PLEASURE 79

folly in pleasures past, yet must he be wiser than *Solomon*, who sees it in those to come. Yet wiser than *Solomon*, in this respect, must we be, or continue mere Ideots; and Ideots with regard to the present life; for this life's enjoyment lies, chiefly, in our title to the joys of the next; as earth becomes fruitful from the kind influence of the distant sun.

And now what occasion of advancing any thing more to the condemnation of these sons of *Epicurus*, and in disavour of Pleasure, than this, viz. That by darkning our understandings, it robs us of *this* world; and by stupefying our consciences, of the *next*. So far are they from their boasted happiness, that even in the judgment of a Heathen (not to mention the Scripture, of much less

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less authority with them), they are dead while yet alive. *Is deum VIVERE, atque animâ frui videtur; qui alicui intentus negotio, aut artis bonæ, aut præclari facinoris famam querit.* Salust.

It is said of their master Epicurus, *Deos verbis reliquit, re sustulit.* By his, and their, Goddess, Pleasure, they do just the same. They loudly boast, and effectually destroy, it; the first thro' want of modesty; the last, thro' want of understanding. But they must keep themselves in countenance, tho' out of heart; and make themselves some *small* amends from vanity, for what is wanting to reason, and to sense.

Nor tread they their master's steps in this alone. He, out of a
swarm

swarm of dancing atoms was for making a world: they, out of a giddy whirl of innumerable amusements, those minute particles of Pleasure, are for forming happiness: A system equally philosophical; and of equal success. A God alone can make one; the God-like only can achieve the other: And where are they to be found in his hopeful school?

The *one thing necessary* for happiness is in common to both worlds, this, and the next. In vain we seek a different receipt for it, one in Time, another in Eternity. - *Virtue* wanting, every thing else becomes necessary to happiness, and ineffectual. To what amounts, then, the boast of their numberless felicities? It brings, in proof of their Happiness,

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a demonstration of their Misery. *A good man shall be satisfied from himself alone.* A bad man shall be dissatisfied, with all the world at his devotion.

But there is a third particular, in which, if they had followed their master, it would have been more for their advantage and credit: An indulgent Providence has abundantly provided us with irreproveable Pleasures; why are these swept away with an ungrateful hand, to make room for poisons of our own deadly composition, to be placed in their Head? *Epicurus* was in love with his Gardens. But that is an amour too innocent for *them*: a garden has ever had the praise, and affection, of the wife. What is requisite to make a wife, and happy man, but Reflection,

tion, and Peace? and both are the natural growth of a garden. Nor is a garden only a promoter of a good man's happiness, but a picture of it; and, in some sort, shews him to himself. Its culture, order, fruitfulness, and seclusion from the world, compared to the weeds, wildness, and exposure of a common field, is no bad emblem of a good man compared to the multitude. A garden weeds the mind; it weeds it of worldly thoughts; and sows celestial seed in their stead. For what see we there, but what awakens in us our gratitude to Heaven? A garden to the virtuous is a paradise still extant; a paradise unlost. What a rich present from Heaven of sweet incense to man; was wafted in that breeze? What a delightful entertainment of sight glows on yonder bed, as if in

H 2 kindly

kindly showers the watry bow had shed all its most celestial colours, on it? Here are no objects that fire the passions: none that do not instruct the understanding, and better the heart, while they delight the sense; but not the sense of *these* men. To them the Tulip has no colours; the Rose no scent: their palate for Pleasure is so deaden'd, and burnt out by the violent stroke of higher tastes, as leaves no sensibility for the softer impressions of these; much less for the relish of those philosophic, or moral, sentiments, which the verdant walk, clear stream, embowering shade, pendant fruit, or rising flower, those speechless, not powerless, orators, ever praising their great Author, inspire: much less still for their religious inspirations. Who cannot look on a Flower till he frightens himself out of

of Infidelity? Religion is the natural growth of the works of God; and Infidelity, of the inventions of men.

Spiritually blind, deaf, and stupid, they see not the great *Omnipresent* walking in the garden; they hear not his call; they know not that they are naked; they hide not among the trees; but stand in open defiance of his laws. *Religion* is far from them.

And where can we hope Religion, if not in *Age*? And are *Hecubas* among the bright *Helens* of our times? Is diversion grown a Leveller, like Death? Can Assemblies banish distinction, and shew us all Dates, like Church-yards? the latter, for *their* years, is the more proper scene. Give me leave, Sir, to address them; and

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address them in haste: They may die
by to-morrow. To-night they are
shining at the Assembly. Thither,
for a moment, Imagination trans-
ports me to attend them.

“ So various, Ladies! and cogent,
“ are the reasons which might call
“ you to this place, that I am at a
“ loss which to thank for the honour
“ it receives. Come you to admire,
“ or to be admired? Your modesty
“ declines the last. Come you out of
“ kindness, then, to authorize those
“ amusements, you chuse not to ad-
“ orn? or come you, out of Com-
“ passion, to make these young cri-
“ minals appear more innocent, than
“ they could appear uncompar’d
“ with superior indiscretion? or come
“ you, out of Piety, to return thanks
“ at this *religious house*, for your so
“ nar-

" narrowly escaping the grave? or
 " come you, out of pure Generosity,
 " to heighten the mirth of the night?
 " Your point is carried. What bor-
 " row'd ornaments are these? Is va-
 " nity still in its spring? Is the folly
 " of hairless heads putting forth its
 " gay blossoms in the December of
 " life? Age cannot drop its dignity,
 " and yet retain its privileges. It
 " must be laughed at, if it will not
 " be revered; and objects of reve-
 " rence cannot enter at these doors.
 " We reverence Age, as we reve-
 " rence noble Birth; on supposition,
 " both: if our supposition proves
 " false, our homage dies.

" A little entertainment, you say,
 " is natural.---What a portentous
 " jumble of seasons, what a viola-
 " tion of Nature is this; Winter

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“ dancing with the Spring? Where
 “ are the first partakers of your
 “ pastimes, when pastimes became
 “ you? Their very monuments are
 “ in ruins. What real connection of
 “ heart, or interests, can you have
 “ with any now alive? And without
 “ such connection, how insipid your
 “ commerce with them? Sure you
 “ can’t approve *Mexentius’s* connec-
 “ tion of the Living with the Dead.

“ Hang your Hours, though, pro-
 “ bably, so few, so *very* heavy on
 “ your hands, that you had rather
 “ bear contempt, than them? Is it
 “ drown’d by the sprightly Viol, or
 “ hear you yon solemn Bell? Wants
 “ That the Power to call you to your
 “ Closets, which calls your grand-
 “ children to their Graves? Is it thus
 “ you discharge the duties of age to
 “ the

“ the rising generation ? Whatever
 “ seeds of prudence you would sow
 “ in their hearts, before they can
 “ take root, these vanities blow a-
 “ way ; especially, if you, like the
 “ Ladies of Lapland, heighten the
 “ * *Hurricane* yourselves.

“ Have you never heard, my
 “ good Ladies ! of the Redemption
 “ of Time ? You carry yours to mar-
 “ ket, and sell it for nothing ; nay,
 “ you dearly buy it off your hands.
 “ Can nothing but such trifles, such
 “ murder of time, make you think
 “ that you are alive ? Can nothing
 “ but the stroke of Death convince
 “ you, you shall die ? To their Beau-
 “ ty alone, too much amusement is
 “ forgiven, even in the young. What,
 “ then, have *you* to plead ?--- What is
 “ fairer

* Some Assemblies so called.

“ fairer than Beauty, if you will
“ call it to your aid. Virtue can re-
“ concile our respect to wrinkles. It
“ can render age amiable, when
“ bloom smiles in vain. But Vice,
“ and Deformity, when twisted to-
“ gether, is such a *Gorgon*, as turns
“ the tenderest heart into stone.

“ Pardon, Ladies! that I presume
“ to call that Vice, which you will
“ soften by some milder name. What
“ is innocence in Youth, may be
“ vice in Years. Besides, mark the
“ mischief of what you call harm-
“ less Expedients to smoothe the rug-
“ ged path of life. You spread that
“ path with snares, to the ruin of
“ those you love. You make *pa-*
“ *rental authority*, that natural safe-
“ guard of youth; their temptation
“ to folly; and *filial obedience*, so
“ lovely,

“ lovely, so pious, the strange cause
 “ of their crimes. Thro’ such mazes
 “ of more than folly, when Parents
 “ lead the way ; Children, out of
 “ pure duty, may tread their wrong
 “ steps. Or, if they have more dis-
 “ cernment, or more grace ; what
 “ follows ? --- What you yourselves
 “ will be shocked to hear ; and I to
 “ tell : A daughter blushing for Her
 “ who bore her. Which, to my
 “ knowlege, and astonishment, has
 “ been the too memorable, and too
 “ deplorable, case.”

Here I would fain leave off, and
 throw a mantle over the nakedness
 of our own sex : but that would be
 too great partiality. It is too sure
Adam also fell. As I have spoken
 to his Daughters, I must speak, Sir,
 by your permission, now to his *aged*
 Sons.

Sons. I can speak with more freedom to These: I was forced to spare his daughters, out of decency.

“ Ye first on roll for Eternity!
“ why this waste of time? Why is
“ its date quite erased? Your spruce
“ appearance is a perfect forgery.
“ And deserves it not the wonted
“ penalty for it? You, for whom it
“ is almost as unnatural, as for a
“ mole, to be seen above ground,
“ what mean you by trespassing on
“ this nether world? Or if here,
“ ye deserters from death! to whose
“ corps you belong, why lift into
“ so very foreign a service? Death,
“ the more he is forgot, the more
“ formidable he grows. But how
“ could you forget him, who have
“ seen him snatching from your
“ bosoms such numbers of your
“ friends?

“ friends ? Has he so often knock’d
 “ at the next door, and so frequent-
 “ ly shook his lance in vain ? Will
 “ you drop into the grave on your
 “ road to the ball ? You, who, one
 “ full age of man expired, com-
 “ mence a new, with all the wan-
 “ tonness of youth, by an antichri-
 “ stian regeneration ; a *second* birth
 “ into all the foibles of a sensual
 “ life ! Consider, what tender re-
 “ verence, what respect mixt with
 “ compassion, is paid to years own-
 “ ing their infirmities, and sup-
 “ porting them, as they ought. But
 “ infirmities of body dissembled,
 “ that those of the mind may be
 “ the more indulged ; a vicious
 “ mind stinging on a jaded body
 “ into shame ; this calls not only
 “ for the scorn, but destitution, of
 “ mankind.

“ Con-

“ Consider, Sirs ! is there not
 “ some mistake ? Do not your minds,
 “ thro’ disorder of the machine, go
 “ too slow, and misrepresent the
 “ time of day ? else, how could
 “ men, who have not space sufficient
 “ left between them, and their
 “ graves, for life’s wonted delusions
 “ to display their gay phantoms ;
 “ who can hardly hope to repeat to-
 “ morrow the farce of to-day ; still
 “ persist to be boys ? Young men,
 “ indeed, may see visions of what
 “ never shall come to pass ; and be
 “ ravished with them : but old men
 “ in their senses, cannot so much as
 “ dream dreams of delight ; such
 “ delight, I mean, as yours. What
 “ delight can these gay scenes af-
 “ ford you ? I should think you
 “ should be more mortified, than
 “ amused, where you scarce can
 “ see

“ see a face that does not make you
 “ look twenty years older than be-
 “ fore. Hope you any regard, or
 “ affection among them? No; de-
 “ spair even of toleration, but when
 “ these *Moderns*, for amusement, dip
 “ into you, as into chronological
 “ Tables, to know what happened
 “ before the flood: find friends in
 “ coevals, or despair.

“ Indeed, my good Friends, in
 “ *one* sense, most certainly, you are
 “ strangers upon earth, why will
 “ you not be so in the *best*? That
 “ you might be so in the best, is,
 “ probably, the sole reason you are
 “ still alive. Men in years, and the
 “ Clergy, are the two natural sup-
 “ ports of Virtue and Religion; that
 “ is, the two columns on which
 “ public welfare is built. And the
 “ first

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“ first is the stronger, as there is
 “ less prejudice against it. They
 “ both have higher obligations to
 “ wisdom than other men : And if
 “ the world sees those higher obli-
 “ gations fail of their due effect,
 “ their consciences will sit easier un-
 “ der the neglect of their own. The
 “ Clergy are volunteers ; the Aged
 “ are pressed by Nature into the ser-
 “ vice of wisdom : And if they both
 “ desert, Vice may triumph without
 “ a battle ; and Virtue fall without
 “ a mourner.

“ Ye fine men of rank, and parts !
 “ a common foldier (your contempt,
 “ no doubt) shall reproach you,
 “ One of them, requesting dismis-
 “ sion from Charles Vth, gave this
 “ reason for it, *Inter vitæ negotia*
 “ *extremumque diem apartet aliquod*
 “ tem-

“ *temporis intercedere*. Much more,
 “ *inter vite voluptates*, and our last
 “ hour. Will you go to your graves
 “ with your eyes shut, as *Plutarch*
 “ tells you the Spartans went to
 “ their beds in the dark? If so, as
 “ reasonable men in years enter their
 “ graves, as a harbour; you will
 “ strike on yours, as on a rock.
 “ You do not only expose your-
 “ selves, but your whole species.
 “ When they that have most reason
 “ to be wise, are the farthest from
 “ it; it sinks the dignity of our
 “ common nature, brings, beyond
 “ all other enormities, a reproach
 “ on mankind; and gives each in-
 “ dividual, as a sufferer, as a sharer
 “ in the scandal, a just right not
 “ only of censure, but revenge.

I

“ This

“ This will excuse my indigna-
 “ tion at two *notorious* offenders;
 “ and therefore I shall dare name
 “ them. Who are they, but *Sedbury*,
 “ and *Torrismond*? Their Pictures
 “ have been partly drawn by the
 “ famous *Seymour*: I shall sketch
 “ the rest. These are two perfect
 “ heroes in this transgression; old
 “ offenders in an offence, which,
 “ till old, they could not begin:
 “ who join the gallantries of *Paris*
 “ to the years of *Nestor*: who read
 “ a Play-bill, and a Bill of morta-
 “ lity, with the same sensation, and
 “ aspect: who can *amuse* themselves
 “ with a Cathedral Service; and go
 “ for an hour’s *diversion* to the Fu-
 “ neral of a friend!

“ How many friends have they
 “ lost? that is, how often has their
 “ con-

“ confidence in the world been
“ shaken at the root? and give they
“ still full proof of their obstinate
“ adherence to, and cordial incor-
“ poration with, it? Has it not daily
“ crumbled away in their fingers?
“ and will they hug it still? How
“ can their hearts still swell with
“ those flatten’d bubbles of idle joy,
“ so often prick’d by death?

“ Ye two antediluvian Youths!
“ what greater folly on earth than
“ that of confounding Seasons, and
“ not giving their respective appro-
“ priations to the different periods
“ of life? Nothing can be in credit,
“ that is out of character; and cre-
“ dit you affect, no one more. If
“ you would find it, let these gentle
“ hints, like the light touch of a
“ magic wand, make you shrink
I 2 “ from

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“ from your vernal bloom ; and wi-
 “ ther at least to the decencies of
 “ fourscore ; for I would make you
 “ some allowance still.

“ Know you not that they who
 “ in their wrinkled decline outdive
 “ in folly the temerities of youth,
 “ and die immaturally at twice the
 “ age of man, are void of shame
 “ from censure human, and divine ;
 “ quite callous to God, and Men ?
 “ Know you not that such faults
 “ after seventy are as severely judged
 “ by this world, as the next ? To
 “ be born like a wild ass's colt, is
 “ natural ; but not to live so, and
 “ retain the Colt's tooth, when
 “ all the man's are fallen out. Time
 “ was, when to Centaurize was less
 “ ridiculous. But unless your eque-
 “ strian part is now dismissed, laugh-
 “ ter

ON PLEASURE. 101

"ter is irresistible; as your friend

"Horace assures you:

*Solve senescentem mature sanus
equum, ne*

Peccet ad extremum ridendus.

"Instead of surfeiting every public
"place with your ungodly Omni-
"presence, you should be reserved
"as the great Mogul. A little
"self-annihilation would be the
"wisest way even for your own
"vanity; for the more we forget
"our age, the more we remind
"others of it; and the younger we
"would appear, so much older
"shall we look, in all eyes but
"our own.

"Yes, Gentlemen! to preserve
"your dignity, retire like Eastern

I 3

"Kings.

“ Kings. And kings, indeed, you
 “ may be, and glorious ones too, if
 “ you will be wise : For „ Wisdom
 “ „ is the *Crown* of old age ; and
 “ „ the Fear of the Lord is its
 “ „ *Glory*.”

Since the witchcraft of Pleasure is so strong as to turn young men into old, by their infirmities ; and old into young, by their affectation, and conceit ; let us look a little more narrowly into the perverse composition of that marvellous Being, which we style a *Man of Pleasure* ; and make somewhat, if possible, like an analysis of it.

The man of Pleasure (tho' I fear he never ask'd himself the question) of what nature, species, or rank in the creation conceives he himself to be ?

be? Does this yet unconstrued, undecyphered creature consider himself as an *immortal* Being? or only as a *rational*? or as a mere *animal*? If as an Immortal, let him regard things eternal: if as a Rational, let reason reign: if as a mere Animal, let him indulge appetite: but not go beyond it; when appetite is satisfied, an animal's meal is over: if as a composition of all three; let it not be a confusion of them; let it be a *composition*; and order alone can preserve that name.

No; he is for neither of these. He is an Immortal, without a sense of Immortality. He is a Rational, dethroning Reason; and an Animal, transgressing Appetite: an unhappy combination, a wretched chaos of all, without the benefit of either:

may, a sufferer from each, because an abuser of all. They are not, as Heaven designed them, three parties in alliance for his happiness; but three conspirators, of his own making, against his peace.

For mark this immoral maze of human ruin; Appetite, Reason, and Immortality, violate, and are violated by, each other. Subtle Reason finds arts, and arguments to tempt Appetite beyond her bounds. Unbounded Appetite with stupefying sensualities bribes Reason to drop her dominion. Her dominion dropp'd renders blind Immortality regardless of things eternal: and they being disregarded, all Immortality's boundless powers, and desires, devolve on things temporal; and devolved on them, with violence impet deposed.

Reason,

Reason, and riotous Appetite, to monstrous lengths of extravagance, which had otherwise lain quite beyond both their power, and desire.

Thus stands the perplexed, and hitherto, not unravel'd case. The Man, in his constitution, debauches the Brute : the Brute debauched, dethrones the Man : the dethroned Man, and debauched Brute, join in rebellion against the Immortal : the subdued Immortal resigns to them its infinite powers and desires ; which they exert to the destruction absolute of all three.

The Man, if not in alliance with an Immortal, never would have had an unbounded power and desire. If not in alliance with a Brute, he never would have debased them

to

to mean, and sordid ends; never would have confined them to things below: but being joined to both, and thro' perverseness, and stupidity, rendering celestial Immortality inglorious, and terrestrial Brutality more brutal, he creates a far more miserable Being than either of them apart could possibly have been.: We may therefore congratulate the mere Brute on his high prerogative of being incapable of becoming such a monster of rationality as this. And the *Man of Pleasure*, if modest, will, for the future, give the wall to his horse. He, like *Codrus*, disguises his dignity to rush into danger; and happy for him, if he meets with nothing worse than death.

Reason, and Immortality, the *Man*, and the *Immortal*, these only

occasion the calamity; and the poor *Animal*, an innocent ally, must suffer with them.

If your Sister's favourites will contemplate themselves in any glass but their own, let them look in this true mirror; and tho' the features are somewhat monstrous, let them not disown them; since they may change them when they please; and they are pictured so minutely, that they may be the more inclined so to do. For what a hideous ruin of humanity is this? The world after the deluge, a less melancholy sight. Such shocking footsteps sin leaves behind it, in nature animate, and inanimate. Reason, and Virtue, are the sole beauty, and sole salvation of all. Thro' all her realms Creation groans without it. The Deity is all reason in his nature;

nature, conduct, and commands. The great, invariable, eternal, Alternative, throughout his creation, is, or Reason, or Ruin. To how many ears in this happy Metropolis is this dismal news?

I was going to say, that reason is the sole basis of happiness; but it is not. There are three kinds of happiness on earth, gradually less, and less. There is a happiness from the exertion of reason, where reason is given: This is the happiness of a *Man*. There is an inferior happiness from the gratification of sense, where reason is denied: This is the happiness of a *Brute*. And there is a calamitous happiness where reason is suppressed, or abused: And this is the happiness of a *Wretch*. You see then in what line of happiness our fine men must be content to rank.

I know your Sister will call my analysis above, a Labyrinth of Sophistry. I will therefore give the *Man of Pleasure's* character in a manner less perplexed, and which she may probably censure as too plain; and may wish a clue were wanting to find the meaning.

He is one, who, desirous of being more happy than any man *can* be, is less happy than most men *are*.

One, who seeks happiness everywhere, but where it is to be found.

One, who out-toils the Labourer, not only without his wages, but paying dearly for it.

He is an Immortal being, that has but two marks of a man about him, upright

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upright stature, and the power of playing the fool, which a monkey has not.

He is an Immortal being, that triumphs in this single, deplorable, and yet *false* hope, that he shall be as happy as a monkey when they are both dead ; tho' he despairs of being so, while yet alive.

He is an Immortal being, that would lose none of its *most* darling delights, if he were a Brute in the mire ; but would lose them all intirely, if he were an Angel in Heaven.

It is certain, therefore, that he desires not to be there : And if he not so much as *desires* it now, how can he ever *hope* it, when his day of dissipation is over ? And if no hope —
what

On PLEASURE. III

what is our Man of Pleasure? a man of distraction, and despair, to-morrow..

And who would buy to-day so dear, if it were so to be bought? as certainly it is not. Doubtless the *true* Man of Pleasure is he, who preserves order in his compounded nature; and gives the Animal, Rational, and Immortal, their respective dues. Who, as *Immortal*, places in the supreme Being his supreme delight; and, as *Rational*, shunning superstitious austerities, and, as *Animal*, too great indulgencies; admits of all secular enjoyments that are strictly consistent with his *supreme*. The *true*, and *false*, Man of Pleasure are brothers; born of the same parent, *viz.* an inextinguishable love of delight: but so superior is one to the other, that
like

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like the fabled brothers *Caster* and *Pollux*, one may be said to be in Heaven, the other on earth.

To be more explicit, I would gather three particular branches from this general root of happiness, and present them to your Sister, as a Specimen of the rest.

There is no man of Pleasure without his Eve; no Eve without her Serpent; no Serpent without its Sting. He that knows not the pure delight, and ever-growing tenderness of a chaste Love, knows not the most that the fairest can bestow.

He that knows not the sound cordiality, and constant warmth of a disinterested friendship, knows not
the

ON PLEASURE. 113

the most that man can enjoy from man.

He that keeps not open a constant intercourse with Heaven by frequent fervors of rational devotion, knows not a joy still sublimer than both.

What are the joys of vice, compar'd to these? What think their deluded admirers of a magnanimous triumph over strong temptation; of a sweet repose in divine favour and protection; of an indefeasible right to life eternal? Is there not a certain grandeur, and solidity of happiness in this? Is not this better than ranging from the gaming-house to brothels; and with other little fluttering, gilded, noxious, liquorish, insects, to be fixing on every nuisance

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for

for delight? Sons of *Baelzebub*, the God of Flies. I like not a certain, modest faintheartedness in the friends, and advocates of what is right. A Christian should let all see what an animation there is in Christianity above all that the world may admire besides. Christianity should be the Boast, as well as Comfort, of our hearts.

And now if we inquire after the cause which has brought us into that Fool's Paradise, on which I have dwelt so long, we shall see with what good reason *Pleasure*, and *Infidelity*, are joined together in my plan.

The Scripture ascribes the conquest of the World, that is, of its Pleasures, to *Faith*; and is very co-
pious

pious in enumerating renowned instances of it. Were Faith as prevalent in us, we too should prove *Alexanders* in the moral world. All agree, that several goods being proposed for our *ultimate* enjoyment, it is impossible in our *nature* not to chuse the *best*. All agree, that God's promises are better than any thing we can carve for ourselves. And all agree, that they are inconsistent with sin. So that he who will take out his portion in this life, *must* lose it in the next. What then, against our *nature*, and against our *reason*, hinders us from prosecuting our *chiefest Good*?—Want of *Faith*. All is resolveable into that alone.

For instance. Our Temptations are of two kinds. From things that grieve, or things that *please*; the

K 2 former

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former *fright*, the latter *allure* us, from our Virtue. From poverty, pain, disgrace, or persecution, we fly to Falshood, or Fraud, for escape. But those ills are not the immediate cause of it; but want of *Faith* in God's promises, that "He will succour us in those exigencies; and deliver us in his good time; and make all things work together for our good." On the other hand, when Pleasure intices, and carries its point; we do not think those Pleasures, be they what they will, preferable to Heaven. But Heaven is at a distance, and the soul is eager for present good. But why is Heaven at a distance? for want of *Faith*; for *Faith* is "the *substance* of things hoped for; and the *evidence* of things not seen." It antedates the existence of that which is future; and makes

makes "our conversation in Heaven,
 " tho' still in the Body; associates
 " us with Angels, tho' in our Soli-
 " tude; and gives us greater joy in
 " contemplation, than the world can
 " give in hand." This is true, or the
 conduct of those heroes in Scripture
 had been impracticable! and they,
 like ourselves, were mere men. Thus
Infidelity leads to *Pleasure*; and
Pleasure confirms *Infidelity*; and both
 together consummate Ruin.

These Gentlemen seem to think
 that the world was made in jest;
 that there is nothing of moment, or
 serious in it. There is nothing else.
 There is not a Fly, but has had infi-
 nite wisdom concern'd, not only in
 its structure, but in its destination.
 And was Man made only to flutter,
 sing, and expire? A mere expletive in

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the mighty work, the marvellous operations of the Almighty? Is joy *their* point? He that to the best of his power has secured the *final stake* has a *fons perennis* of joy within him. He *is satisfied from himself*. They, his reverse, borrow all from without. Joy wholly from without, is false, precarious, and short. From without it may be gathered; but, like gathered flowers, tho' fair, and sweet for a season, it must soon wither, and become offensive. Joy from *within*, is like smelling the rose on the tree; it is more sweet and fair; it is lasting; and, I must add, Immortal.

As, therefore, I have above offered these Gentlemen three expedients for happiness; to persuade their acceptance of them, I shall now give
three

three short Maxims, which will fit light on their memories, and (I hope) in time, easy on their hearts.

He that will not *fear*, shall *feel* the wrath of Heaven.

He that lives in the kingdom of *Sense*, shall die into the kingdom of *Sorrow*.

He shall never truly enjoy his *present* hour, who never thinks on his *last*.

Let your Sister, dear Sir, tell her *grey* pretty fellows, who are Apostles to these *Gentiles*, that, if they can advance three Maxims of greater truth ; or three Expedients of greater efficacy to happiness, than those above-mentioned ; I am their Con-

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vert ; I exchange my Bible for Bo-
lingbroke ; and prepare for the Ball ;
for, N. B. I am but Fourcore.

. With best wishes to you, and those
you love, that is, all Mankind ; I
am,

Dear Sir,

Most affectionately,


Yours.

LET



LETTER III.
ON
PLEASURE.

Dear Sir,

HE Contents of your Letter damp my joy in hearing from you. Even a good man's approaching death strikes us with *some* concern. I am sorry that the sting, which *Pleasure* left in your unhappy Friend, occasions so swift a decline.

decline. How naturally we lay hold on Heaven, when the world sinks under us, and will support our hopes no more! The Piece of Devotion which you desire, you shall receive in my next. I cannot reflect on your Friend's distress, and a noble youth whom I myself attended in his Extremes, without dwelling still longer on *Pleasure*, which has cost the World so dear.

If Disease, and Infirmary, make us daily visits in the persons of our Neighbours, and Friends; and Death, by the same affecting messengers, gives us frequent notice that he will be with us soon:

If, when Death arrives, all Mankind, however divided before, unanimously

nimously close in one Opinion, and one Wish :

If libertine Enjoyments hasten the approach, and heighten the dread, and embitter the consequences, of Death :

If Death is the single event sure, and Virtue the single pursuit indefeasible ; and the Divine Favour the single point of absolute Importance :

If that favour comes so cheap, that the very leavings (in time, care, and expence) of our *real* enjoyments, would go a great way in the purchase of it :

If the Martyr's blood makes that purchase sure ; and it is impossible
that

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that *Martyrdom*, and *Voluptuousness*,
should share the same fate :

If the Fate to be shar'd is endless;
and this Life but as a moment to an
age ; and an age not a moment to
Eternity ; and Eternity as much ours,
as the present hour :

If he, that is over-fond of the *pre-
sent*, or high in expectation from any
future, hour, either knows not this
world ; or believes not in the next ;

If all this is true ; that is, if it is
day at noon ; how happy, like your
friend *Eusebius*, to strike early into
the right path ; and not so long to
slumber in indulgence, like the noble
Youth (of whom I shall soon speak),
as to suffer the Birth-day of our un-
derstanding

derstanding to be the last day of our lives?

I told you, in a former letter, that I would give you your Friend *Eusebius*'s character at large; not, to be sure, for your information; but to place him in Opposition to the *Men of Pleasure*: And so,

Facem preferre pudendis. JUV.

that their Deformity may be set in a stronger light, for the benefit of those weak eyes, who cannot see a mountain without spectacles; with whom a *Centaur* passes for a Man. Or, rather, who think a Man of Pleasure an extremely happy creature, and, with antient Astronomers, place the *Centaur* in Heaven. Their *Sagittarius* there, or eternal Hunter, ever aiming at *Pleasure*, and ever missing his

mark. How very much, the character of *Eusebius* will plainly shew.

Men of Pleasure, notwithstanding all the thorns they meet with in their flowery path, imagine all would enter it, but for want of Taste, or Spirit, or Purse: *Eusebius* wants none of these. He wants not a Taste for aught that can gratify either Imagination or Sense; that can make a Coxcomb, or Debauché; but he is neither. Nor wants he a Purse, or Heart, to provide those Gratifications. His Purse is large; larger his Heart; but not corrupt, and nobly *wrong*. He is young, gay, rich, expensive. So far he is with them; but will leave them soon, as the Sun slides from under an Eclipse. *His* riches widen the circle of his Virtues. *Their* riches increase the number of their

their Crimes. There are two kinds of expence: In both, Riches make themselves wings, and fly away. But widely different their flight: In one, they fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven. In their flight beautiful, and celestial in their end. In the other, they fly away as an Owl to the Defart; ungracious, and ill-omen'd, in their flight, and ending in the Defart of Ignominy, and Ruin.

Eusebius, tho' liberal to the demands of Nature, Rank, and Duty; starves Vice, Caprice, and Folly. These (the great cormorants of gold), he sends begging to *their* doors; they, as old intimates, welcome, and embrace them all. And, if they have not thrice the fortune of *Eusebius*, must soon be Beggars themselves.

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While he, with one half ~~they~~ sink in a debauch, lift Beggars : (Beggars, I mean from Fortune, not from Folly) into the real comforts of life.

He too has his *Amusements* ; but not such as deaden, but revive : such as recover the relax'd tone of application ; re-animate to new effort ; and thus are essential, tho' pausing, parts of noble, well-judging *Industry*. He starts not at a masquerade : Nor thinks Cards the Books of the Devil. But thinks all our diversions like long books, that were better epitomiz'd ; or, like the Books of the *Sybil*, which, as they were lessen'd in number, rose in their price.

He, as well as they, has his Parks, Gardens, Grottos, Cascades, Statues, Paint-

Paintings, &c. but enjoys them more. Not because his are better than theirs, but because He is better than They. His Paintings have beauties unborrowed from the pencil; and his Statues in *his* eyes appear, like *Pygmalion's*, to live; tho' *mere* marble in *theirs*. His all-animating Joy within gives Graces to Art, and Smiles to Nature, invisible to common eyes. Objects of sense, and imagination, for their greater power of pleasing, are indebted to the goodness of his heart. For as the Sun is itself the most glorious of objects, and makes all others shine; so Virtue itself is the greatest of Pleasures, and of all other Pleasures redoubles the delight.

He, and They, tho' they both value Riches, yet entertain widely different opinions about them. He con-

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siders

siders a great fortune, as his being
 put, by a kind Providence, into its
 honourable commission for doing
 much Good. They consider it as a
 Privilege, or, at least, as an Excuse,
 for the contrary. He, surveying his
 ample arcades, and lofty domes, re-
 joices more in what benefits others,
 than what aggrandizes himself: Re-
 joices more in considering how many
 mouths he has fed, than in consider-
 ing how many eyes he has drawn;
 He triumphs in reflecting to what
 numbers he has been enabled, by the
 Divine Indulgence, to turn, without
 a miracle, those Stones into Bread.
 They, from their huge Babel-like
 Buildings, contract a Babel-like Pride,
 which turns, with regard to those be-
 neath them, their hearts into Stone.
 Such Men, in effect, build downward,
 and

are the more ignoble, that is the lower, for their Height.

He thinks, that Heaven's rich donations imply in them some transfer to the public : *They* think they imply a transfer of the public homage to themselves. Instead of imagining his Grandeur to be a demand on the public for its homage, he looks on it as the public's demand on him for Bounty, and Patronage, of which they have erected such proud promises ; and by them raised so just an expectation. He thinks, that their Riches (how strangely soever it may sound) run them in debt ; and that not to benefit, is, to defraud.

His Humility is equal to his Magnificence ; and as Magnificence with Humility speaks more regard for

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others, than himself, it escapes Envy, and ensures general Applause. Their Pride defeats their Magnificence, and robs it of that Applause, which is its single aim: For it is a great authority which tells us, "*That Pride is a Tree which eats up its own Fruit.*"

He knows (what *They* consider not), that splendid superiorities cannot be neutral, with regard to the characters of those who possess them; that, therefore, men possess them at their peril; that they must degrade, if they do not exalt them. That Heaven, which, in spite of different ranks, levels Happiness, design'd it as the peculiar curse of the Great (if they deserve it) to be lessened by Grandeur, and illustriously disgraced. That, if *Apes*, and *Crocodiles*,

codiles, Men hurtful, or ridiculous, inhabit superb piles, they must despair of being worship'd; tho' but thro' vain and keen appetite for public incense, they never had been built.

You see in how many points these Men fall short of *Eusebius* in Pleasure from *Expence*; which, notwithstanding, is an Article on which they pique themselves not a little. And give me leave to subjoin one more particular, which will affect them less, than the former, tho' it ought to affect them most of all: *His* wealth has subterranean chanel; blesses unseen; and costs the reliev'd neither blushes, nor thanks. Not one Prison have *They* open'd; not one Tear have *They* dried; which might speak in their favour, when their own begin to flow. The Sorrows we have

L 3 reliev'd

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reliev'd are the surest support in our own. The best that can be said of their expences, is, that they are an unwilling Encomium on those of your Friend.

Sensual, of all our Pleasures are the meanest ; how low must a Soul celestial stoop for them? Yet these, our thirsty Sponges of Sensuality, who suck up every drop of it, in or out of, their way, tho' they take up the Dirt with it, prefer to all the rest. And in these, if in any, they will venture to dispute his superiority. But, for reasons, some already mention'd ; more, most obvious, He is their superior in these. In Pleasures *Intellectual*, how far are they behind him? and then the *Moral*, they are all his own. It is one of their minute, and meagre Pleasures, professedly

cessedly to decline them : And these are the supreme. Moral Pleasures, tho' faintly (in this imperfect state), yet truly taste of Heaven ; and, what is more, insure that Heaven of which they taste. And what an inestimable superiority is this ? He that can think of Death undismay'd,

*Extremumq; diem vitæ inter munera
ponit.* Lu.

has more Enjoyment, even in Distress, than They in triumph, with every vain amusement turning Reason out of doors, lest it should wound them with one whisper of the Grave. On how many melancholy occasions in life should we be glad of an Asylum to which to fly ? How should we be transported with a thought that had infallible comfort in it ? and that thought can be but One ; and

that one, it is the constant Aim, Labour, nay Boast, of these wise men, to destroy.

Eusebius's love of Pleasure is equal to theirs ; whence then this vast inequality of Happiness? He *commands* his Pleasures, some he cultivates ; some admits cautiously ; others sends blushing away. *Their* Pleasures *domineer* ; scout them away on vilest errands ; bid them throw their Patrimony in the Dirt of Prostitution, or Debauch ; or dungeon them in midnight Dens of Fraud, and Destruction ; and command them to whirl it away with a losing Card ; or stamp it to nothing with a desperate Dye. What Scaffolds of fatal execution are those guilty Boards, where moments determine on fortunes for life ;

life; and Rage, and Distraction threaten Ruin eternal?

From this thralldom to their Pleasures, this wretched Impotence of heart, it is, that while *He* has but one, and that a most gracious Master, *They* have as many Tyrants as there are Follies, and Vices, in the world. Ten times a day they change their *Pharaoh*; and why? because his wages are so poor. They have it, indeed, in their power to change their Master, but not to break their chain.

The *Romans* once pretended that they had a golden shield which fell from Heaven: To secure it from theft, they laid it up among eleven others made of Brass. This expedient had been unnecessary against
their

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their wisdom. They run away by choice with the eleven counterfeits; with a multitude of false, ineffectual Pleasures, and leave the celestial, as of no value, to men of less understanding. — Virtue, the delight of *Emsebius*, is a celestial shield against every evil of human life. Their Pleasures are rather Swords, that *pierce them thro' with many Sorrows*,

The contrast how strong! Their Pleasures die in fruition, and are remember'd with regret. His survive the present actual enjoyment, and are as sweet in retrospect, as in hand. Theirs lessen on repetition; his encrease: Theirs create, and aggravate, calamities; his avert most, and alleviate the rest: Theirs hasten Death, and heighten its Horrors; his owe their Perfection to his final hour,
after

after having heightened, and lengthened, all the blessings of life. And what a wretch is that happiness, and what an idiot that wisdom, that can offer no comfort in the days of darkness, and the hours of death? In a word, *Their* wretched joys flourish, like dismal weeping willows water'd by a ditch: Poor the figure they make; flux and obscene the ground on which they stand: *His* flourish, like Cedars of *Libanus*, from the fountains of Heaven; and are rooted in a rock; the rock of his Salvation.

It is this superior ground on which he stands, which imparts that inimitable sweetness of Air, Aspect, and Deportment, which marks him among multitudes of the gayest, for the Gay. *They*, like things gilt, have much to shew; much more to hide; are

are all darkness within. *He*, like a Diamond; is transparent, and shines at heart. He looks, as if *Virtue*, according to the wish of some sages, was at last become visible, and shone thro' him; in person, not precept, making a visit to mankind: And man is mended by looking on him.

Now, please, Sir, to observe, to what an astonishing degree that intellectual darkness, mention'd in my former letter, prevails in these men, that would outshine all the world. What is their chief boast? Why this, that they *make the most* of this life. Whereas the very fundamental difference between Them, and *Eusebius*, is, That They make Nothing of this world, because they design to make their All of it. He makes much of this world, because he holds it as
little ;

little; because ever having the Sentiments, without the Terrors, of a Death-bed, he never cuts off this life from the thoughts of the next; but sees his whole existence in one unbroken thread extended before him.

But, before I dismiss your Friend, tho' he has made you a very long visit, I must take notice of one particular more. These Gentlemen pique themselves on their epitome of all Virtue and Religion, *Benevolence*: If they had it, it would confute most I have said; and make them very happy: For it may stand as a general maxim, that men are happy in proportion to their good-will: Nor is it strange, that, to the greatest duty, should, by nature, belong the greatest reward. But their title to this virtue is not clear. The reason they
so

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so loudly pretend to it, is, because they know they have it not. The weakest side of a citadel is to be defended most. *Eusebius*, on his principles, *must* have universal good-will. Self-love obliges him to it; and his own happy state of mind inclines him the same way: For all are most kind to others, when most easy, and pleas'd with themselves. On *their* principles, that this world is all; or, at least, all they will concern themselves about; self-love obliges them to the contrary: And their uneasiness in themselves seconds that obligation: So that you may as well expect to find an Angel among the Dissolute, as a Friend. And, indeed, can any expect that they should love them, better than their own Souls? yet that would they do, if they car'd for them at all.

But,

But, instead of endeavouring to prove what needs no proof, I shall present you with the picture of one of these great Lovers of all Mankind, if you will promise not to cut his throat; which Picture, better than a *Demosthenes*, will prove my point. You will know whom I mean, when I tell you, that he is enamour'd of the charms, and deep in the mysteries of Play. That is, he is so fond of riches (which a good Judge tells us, * *nemo bonus unquam concupivit*), of riches is he so over-fond, that he is quite miserable if deny'd a daily chance of being stripp'd to Beggary. Greater professions of friendship can no man make, than this Arch-Promiser; greater proofs of the contrary can no man give. He never did a favour that prov'd barren to his own Designs, but he sent a

curse after it. All his kindnesses are artificial flies; if nothing is caught, they are pocketed again. "*Hook him, or hang him*" is a favourite maxim of his own coining. He smiles, indeed, with great complacency on a crowded Levee of devoted friends; with no less than on a hand of good cards. And his hope from both is just the same; that is, so to play them off, as to win his game. That done, if Interest, or Humour bids, he throws them aside as a foul Pack, and calls for new; to shuffle, and cheat, and play tricks with, as before. He considers Fools, as Trumps, with which he is sure to win. If there are no Fools to be taken in, he makes a pretty good hand of it with a Knave of the right suit. If he is so unlucky as not to be blessed with

either, he gives out, and, for that time, plays no more: For, without a good hand, a bad heart is insupportable. But Prosperity sooths Remorse, and lays Conscience asleep. This is One who knows the world; which, generally, means, One that knows not God. He never thought of that great, final, Stake, with regard to which, he, that honestly but desires it, is sure to win; and he, that plays foul the most dextrously, is sure to be undone. Such is *Avidienus*, such is that *good* man, who, as freely as eat his meal, could lay down his life for his Friend.

But, in excuse for such men, I must own, that, for such as place their All here, there can be no shadow of social happiness but from deceiving, or being deceiv'd. From

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de-

deceiving, and so finding some account in their Villainy: Or, from being deceiv'd, and so finding some account in their Folly. For real friendship amongst them is impossible: And, indeed, to hope a Friend in any man, that is not truly his own Friend, is absurd. From this account, it is evident, that the chief fountain of happiness is dry'd up in *their* hearts.

A *Wretch*, almost smothered with all the reputed means of Happiness, would of all objects be the most ridiculous, were it not the most melancholy too. *Diogenes* went about the city of *Athens* begging to the statues; being ask'd the reason, he said, He was learning to bear a Repulse. These Gentlemen should learn the same Lesson; no Statue can be dearer than
than

than most of their pursuits, when they ask *real* Pleasure of them.

These are the Men, who, while Providence lays the reins of Free-will on their wanton necks, rush headlong into even unimportant Temptations. But when it shall put *its Hook in their Nose, and its Bridle in their Jaws*; when it shall drag them into the condition of your unhappy Friend; or worse, when the tatter'd, convuls'd, Body shall be shaking out an unwilling Soul, loth to leave it for a still worse habitation; Then! Oh! what a change!----It places full before me the last hours of that noble Youth I mentioned above. *Last Hours* full of anguish! how fit to be remember'd by those that wish peace to their own. This is the Funeral to which, in my first Letter, I pro-

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mised to invite your Sister *Sempro-*
nia, and her gay Admirers ; *Sempro-*
nia who delights *Pfallere, & cantare,*
elegantius quam necesse est probæ. And
 what invitation more kind than that
 for which she may thank me for
 ever, when other entertainments end ?
 If *they* have their Wine, *this* has its
 Nectar. Its cup of Salvation, press'd
 from that *Vine, whose Leaves heal the*
Nations, and whose swelling Clusters
 teem with eternal Bliss. Funeral so-
 lemnities are more for the sake of the
 Living than the Dead. What a trifle
 that honour *they* receive from them,
 to the benefit *we* may reap from that
 affecting Scene !

Oh ! Sir, how affecting ! It is still
 before my eyes. That wretched
 Youth dies again ! Again I am smit-
 ten with his Death. It wounds me
even

even in remembrance: What, then, the Scene itself! No Words can paint it; no Time efface it; I meet it in my Dreams; I shall bear it to my Grave

I am about to represent to you the last hours of a person of high birth, and high spirit; of great parts, and strong passions; every way accomplish'd, nor least in Iniquity. His unkind treatment was the Death of a most amiable Wife; and his great Extravagance, in effect, disinherited his only Child.

But to my point. The Death-bed of a profligate is next in horror to that Abyss, to which it leads. It has the most of Hell that is visible on Earth. And he that has seen it, has more than *Faith* to confirm him in his

M 3 Creed.

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Creed. I see it now. For who can forget it? Are there in it no Flames, and Furies?—You know not, then, what a scar'd imagination can figure; what a guilty heart can feel. How dismal is it! The two great Enemies of Soul and Body, Sickneſs and Sin, ſink and confound his Friends; ſilence, and darken the ſhocking ſcene. Sickneſs excludes the *Light* of Heaven; and Sin, its bleſſed *Hope*. Oh! double Darkneſs! more than *Ægyptian*! Acutely to be felt!

How unlike thoſe illuminated revels of which he was the Soul? Did this poor, pallid, ſcarce-animated Maſs dictate in the cabinet of *Pleasure*; pronounce the Faſhion; and teach the gayeſt to be gay? Are theſe the trophies of his *Paphian* conqueſts? theſe the triumphs to be bought with Heaven?

On PLEASURE. 151

Heaven? Is this he who smote all *their* hearts with envy at his pre-eminence in guilt? See, how he lies a sad, deserted, Outcast on a narrow Isthmus between Time and Eternity? for he is scarce alive. Lash'd and overwhelm'd, on one side, by the Sense of Sin; on the other, by the Dread of Punishment! Beyond the reach of human help, and in despair of Divine!

His dissipated Fortune, impoverish'd Babe, and murder'd Wife, lie heavy on him: The Ghost of his murder'd Time (for now no more is left), all stain'd with Folly, and gasht with Vice, haunts his distract-ed Thought. Conscience, which long had slept, *awakes like a giant refresh'd with Wine*; lays waste all his former thoughts, and desires; and,

M 4

like

152 *On PLEASURE.*

like a long-depos'd, *now* victorious
 Prince, on his bleeding heart, im-
 poses, inflicts, its own. Its late soft
 Whispers are *Thunder* in his ears;
 and all means of Grace rejected,
 exploded, ridicul'd, is the *Bolt* that
 strikes him dead. Dead even to the
 thoughts of Death. In deeper dis-
 tress, Despair of Life is forgot. He
 lies a wretched wreck of Man on
 the Shore of Eternity, and the next
 breath he draws, blows him off into
 ruin.

The greatest Profligate is, at least,
 a momentary Saint, at such a fight:
 For this is a fight which plucks off
 the mask of Folly, strips her of her
 gay disguise, which glitter'd in the
 false lights of this world's Mummery,
 and makes her appear to be folly, to
 the greatest fool.

How

How think we then? Is not the Death-bed of a profligate the most natural and powerful antidote for the poison of his Example? Heals not the bruis'd scorpion the wound it gave? Intends not Heaven, that, struck with the terrors of such an exit, we should provide comfort for our own? Would not he, who departs obdurate from it, continue Adamant, tho' one rose from the Dead? for such a scene partly draws aside the curtain that divides Time from Futurity; and, in some measure, gives to Sight that *Tremendous*, of which we only had the feeble Report before.

Is not this then a prime School of Wisdom? are not they obliged, that are invited to this? for what else should reclaim us? The Pulpit? We are prejudic'd against it. Besides,
an

134 *On PLEASURE.*

an agonizing Profligate, tho' *silent*, out-preaches the most Celebrated the Pulpit ever knew. But, if he speaks, his words might instruct the best instructors of mankind. Mixt in the warm converse of life, we think with Men; on a Death-bed, with God.

But there are two Lessons of this School written, as it were, in Capitals, which they that run may read. *First*, He that, in this his Minority, this School of Discipline, this Field of Conflict, instead of grasping the weapons of his warfare, is for ever gathering flowers, and catching at butterflies, with his unarmed hand; ever making idle Pleasures his pursuit; must pay for it his vast reversion; and, on opening his final account (of which a Death-bed breaks the Seal), shall find himself a Beggar;

On PLEASURE. 155

a Beggar past Beggary; and shall passionately wish, that his very Being were added to the rest of his loss.

Secondly, He shall find, that *Truth*, Divine Truth, however, thro' life, injur'd, wounded, suppress'd, is Insuppressible, Victorious, Immortal. That, tho' with mountains overwhelmed, it will, one day, burst out like the fires of *Ætna*; visible, bright, and tormenting, as the most raging flame. As now, (Oh! my friend!) I shall too plainly prove.

The sad evening before the Death of that noble Youth, whose last Hours suggested these Thoughts, I was with him. No one was there, but his Physician, and an Intimate whom he lov'd, and whom he had ruin'd. At my coming in, he said;

“ You,

156 On PLEASURE.

“ You, and the Physician, are come
“ too late.---I have neither Life, nor
“ Hope. You both aim at Miracles.
“ You would raise the Dead.”

Heaven, I said, was merciful.

“ Or I could not have been thus
“ guilty. What has it not done to
“ *blefs*, and to *save* me?---I have
“ been too strong for Omnipotence!
“ I pluck'd down Ruin.”

I said, The Blessed Redeemer---

“ Hold! Hold! you wound me!
“ ---That is the Rock on which I
“ split---I deny'd his Name.”

Refusing to hear any thing from
me, or take any thing from the
Physician, he lay silent, as far as
sudden

On PLEASURE. 157

sudden darts of pain would permit,
'till the clock struck. Then with
vehemence ;

“ Oh, Time! Time! It is fit thou
“ should'st thus strike thy Murderer
“ to the heart.---How art thou fled
“ for ever!---A Month!---Oh, for a
“ single Week! I ask not for Years.
“ Tho' an Age were too little for
“ the much I have to do.”

On my saying, we could not
do too much: That Heaven was a
blessed place —

“ So much the worse. 'Tis lost!
“ 'Tis lost!---Heaven is to me the
“ severest part of Hell!”

Soon after, I propos'd Prayer.

“ Pray

158 *ON PLEASURE.*

“ Pray you that can. I never
 “ pray’d, I cannot pray.---Nor need
 “ I. Is not Heaven on my side al-
 “ ready? It closes with my con-
 “ science. Its severest strokes but
 “ second my own.”

His friend being much touch’d,
 even to tears, at this (who could
 forbear? I could not), with a most
 affectionate look, he said:

“ Keep those tears for Thyself. I
 “ have undone thee.---Dost weep
 “ for me? That’s cruel. What can
 “ pain me more?”

Here his friend, too much affect-
 ed, would have left him.

“ No, stay. *Thou* still may’st *hope*;
 “ —Therefore hear me. How madly
 “ have I talk’d? How madly hast thou.
 “ listen’d,

“ listen’d, and believ’d? But look
 “ on my present State, as a full an-
 “ swer to thee, and to myself. This
 “ body is all weakness and pain ;
 “ but my Soul, as if stung up by
 “ torment to greater strength and
 “ spirit, is full powerful to reason ;
 “ full mighty to suffer. And that,
 “ which thus triumphs within the
 “ jaws of mortality, is, doubtless,
 “ *Immortal*.--And, as for a *Deity*,
 “ nothing less than an Almighty
 “ could inflict what I feel.”

I was about to congratulate this
 passive, involuntary, Confessor, on his
 asserting the two prime articles of
 his Creed, extorted by the Rack of
 Nature ; when he thus, very passion-
 ately :

“ No,

“ No, no! let me speak on. I
 “ have not long to speak---My much-
 “ injur’d friend! my Soul, as my
 “ Body, lies in ruins; in scattered
 “ fragments of broken thought: Re-
 “ morse for the Past throws my
 “ thought on the Future. Worse
 “ dread of the Future, strikes it back
 “ on the Past. I turn, and turn,
 “ and find no ray.---Didst thou feel
 “ half the mountain that is on me,
 “ thou wouldst struggle with the
 “ Martyr for his Stake; and bless
 “ Heaven for the Flames;---That is
 “ not an everlasting flame; That is
 “ not an unquenchable fire.”

How were we struck? yet, soon
 after, still more. With what an eye
 of distraction, what a face of despair,
 he cry’d out:

“ My

“ My principles have poison’d
“ my Friend; my extravagance has
“ beggar’d my Boy; my unkind-
“ ness has murder’d my Wife!—
“ And is there another Hell?—Oh!
“ Thou blasphem’d, yet most In-
“ dulent; Lord God! Hell itself is
“ a refuge, if it hides me from thy
“ Frown.”

Soon after, his understanding fail’d.
His terrified imagination utter’d hor-
rors not to be repeated, or ever for-
got. And ere the Sun (which I hope
has seen few like him) arose, the
gay, young, noble, ingenious, ac-
complish’d, and most wretched, *Al-
tamont* expired.

If this is a Man of Pleasure, what
is a Man of Pain? How quick, how

N

total,

total, is the transit of these *Phaeton-Nades*: In what a dismal gloom they set for ever! How short, alas! the day of their rejoicing! For a moment they glitter, they dazzle. In a moment where are they? Oblivion covers their memories. Ah! would it did! Infamy snatches them from Oblivion. In the long-living annals of Infamy their triumphs are recorded. Their sufferings still bleed in the bosom (Poor *Altament*!) of the heart-stricken friend: For *Altament* had a friend. He might have had many. His transient Morning might have been the dawn of an immortal day. His name might have been gloriously enrolled in the Records of Eternity. His memory might have left a sweet fragrance behind it, grateful to the surviving friend, and
falu-

On PLEASURE. 163

salutary to the succeeding generation. With what capacities was he endowed, with what advantages, for being greatly good? But with the talents of an Angel a man may be a Fool. If he judges amiss in the Supreme Point, judging right in all else but aggravates his Folly; as it shews him wrong, tho' blest'd with the best capacity of being right.

Such, so fatal, when abused, are the greatest blessings of Heaven. Heaven grant *his* agonies were an expiation of the past; not a preface, and sad specimen, of the future. That his surviving Companions and Admirers may never suffer the same, give me leave to speak to them, while this affect-

N 2

ing

ing object is (or might be) in their fight.

“ Ye staunch pursuers of Pleasure,
“ opening in full cry on its burning
“ scent ! who run yourselves out of
“ Breath, Health, Credit, Estate, and
“ often Life, after that you cannot
“ catch ! For a moment, slacken
“ your speed, and cool the fervor of
“ your chace. It is a Friend that
“ calls, and he is his own, that hears.

“ If there is a scene on earth, in
“ which you can find greater advantage,
“ than in that to which you
“ have been invited, do not come :
“ If there is not, indulge me in a
“ few words, which may not be soon
“ forgot : At least, they will recur
“ to your Thoughts, they will recur
“ to your feeling Hearts, when your
“ present

“ present jovial chace is over ; when
“ *Pleasure* is no more.

“ It will be grateful to your Friend
“ deceas'd, whom you were always
“ willing to oblige, if, with his Ac-
“ complishments, you remember his
“ Faults ; for then you will not for-
“ get your own ; but read, in his
“ deep distress, a strong caution
“ against them. Affords not the
“ Rock on which he split, a solid
“ basis for your safety ? Has he not
“ well-mark'd where mischief lies ?
“ See you not the wreck of that gal-
“ lant First-rate ? or, rather, is he not
“ a beacon, lighted up by kind Provi-
“ dence, to guide you safe thro' the
“ dangerous voyage of human life ?

“ He once, as you now, imagin'd
“ himself, in this life, Immortal.

166 On PLEASURE.

" Was he not mistaken? He has ta-
 " ken his final flight; whither, who
 " can tell? If you continue yours,
 " in the same fatal track, who is he
 " that *cannot* tell where the folly must
 " end? Smitten, transfix'd, when
 " most secure, from the most tower-
 " ing heights he drop'd, at once, in-
 " to depths of distress, not to be fa-
 " thom'd by man. In gaiety of heart
 " defy not the danger. Are there
 " not more arrows in the same qui-
 " ver? and are not you as fair and
 " tempting a mark? more tempting;
 " if unadmonish'd, and mounting
 " still over his forgotten tomb, And
 " whom dare you tempt? an Archer
 " that never miss'd his mark,

" But you, from your gay pavi-
 " lion, embower'd in roses, see no
 " threatening prospects; no dangers
 " of

" of death.—Oh, Sirs! Death de-
 " lights to lie hid in thickets of roses!
 " How often the Gayest fall first in
 " his snare? yet even this is too
 " gentle, too mild, to answer the
 " good-will of Heaven; it cannot
 " keep the world in awe.

" What uncommon fortitude is
 " needful to bear Prosperities un-
 " hurt? It is now Sunshine with you;
 " and you think all is well. It is the
 " Season of Indulgence.—But Sea-
 " sons will change. You, that are
 " now all social comfort, gather'd
 " close in glad clusters, and (like
 " embody'd birds of passage bound
 " for new climes) on your impatient
 " wing for new delights! what will
 " you do, when each of you, sever'd
 " from the rest, an unexperient'd,
 " unexpected, Recluse, lies forely
 " N 4 " pain'd ;

168 *On* PLEASURE.

"pain'd; dreading worse; none to
 "converse with, but the two greatest
 "strangers, his own Heart, and Him
 "who made it; and neither at
 "peace with him? Say, ye strangers
 "to Care, and abounders in Mirth!
 "what will he do, when he finds
 "himself still subsisting in a state,
 "where none of those Pleasures, for
 "which alone he wished to subsist,
 "can possibly any longer subsist
 "with him? When the dark mat-
 "ter at the centre will not be more
 "foreign to him, than that which
 "now beats high in his pulse, and
 "flushes in his cheek; and stings
 "him on to schemes, that laugh at
 "such lectures as these? When he
 "finds himself led, by the soft hand
 "of *Pleasure*, to those dismal gates,
 "which she herself will never, ne-
 "ver, never, enter?

"Con-

“ Consider, my good friends! you
“ still retain the name of Christians ;
“ and have heard of the Scriptures.
“ To speak their language, If Chri-
“ stians are Racers, you have not yet
“ started : If Warriors, your ar-
“ mour is not yet on : If Labourers
“ in the Vineyard, you pluck down
“ the Vine, and get drunk with the
“ Grapes : If Watchers, your nap is
“ not yet over. There is no Man,
“ but, in some part of life, either
“ stung by self-mov'd Conscience,
“ or alarm'd by some providential
“ Event, as out of a long idle dream,
“ starts, at once, into his senses.
“ The longer the dream, the greater
“ his surprize and pain ; and, if he
“ nods to the last, the pain and hor-
“ ror (as too well has been prov'd) is
“ inexpressible.

" Cannot that awful Truth inter-
 " rupt your slumber? He sleeps
 " sound indeed, at whose ear a
 " Friend's knell shall knock in
 " vain. But, setting friendship aside ;
 " granting, that with men of your
 " cast, a friend dead is a friend an-
 " nihilated ; ask, I beseech you, pure
 " *self-interest* one question ; " Have
 " you no concern in *this Death* ?
 " *Is it nothing to you ?*" -- Oh ! much,
 " very much ! It cannot stand neu-
 " ter. It is big with good or ill.
 " It must hasten your amendment ;
 " or heighten your offence. Hence-
 " forth, the *same* crimes are seven-
 " fold guilt.

" Have you never consulted the
 " workings of Nature ? Have you
 " never been *surpris'd* with a serious
 " feeling of Heart ? When I stand,
 " tho'

" tho' a stranger, on the verge of
 " another's grave; when I see the
 " shaken mould take possession of
 " human pride; and hear the so-
 " lemn sound of *Dust to Dust*; what
 " swelling of soul, but instantly sub-
 " sides? what salutary thoughts, but,
 " at once, it inspires? The grave of
 " one unknown, and dying a *com-*
 " *mon* death, would have this effect:
 " What then, the Grave of a friend,
 " and of our own character; and
 " that not good; and dying of the
 " follies in which we live; and
 " with admonitions in his mouth,
 " and horrors in his heart? What
 " heart impregnable to such an as-
 " fault? What thunder equal to such
 " a groan? It would echo for ever
 " in a penetrable ear. In a penetra-
 " ble heart there would be wrought
 " a mighty change.

" For

172 On PLEASURE.

“ For see you not the mighty
 “ force that is imply’d in this Mercy?
 “ Heaven trusts not to your faith;
 “ but gives *sensible* proof of what you
 “ have to fear. And could it do
 “ more? Would a Miracle suffice?—
 “ You have it in a mercy so little
 “ deserv’d. If danger can alarm you,
 “ you, *now*, are alarm’d. If nothing
 “ can alarm you, nothing can save.

“ I should grieve to have said too
 “ much. Yet, have I said too much,
 “ if my words serve only to render
 “ more inexcusable that imprudence,
 “ which they labour to remove. Ra-
 “ ther know your danger, and em-
 “ brace the plank (though not of Ce-
 “ dar) which I throw out for your
 “ escape. Our fondness for good, shuts
 “ our eyes on evil; we scarce allow
 “ it existence before it is felt. But,
 “ re-

On PLEASURE. 173

“ remember, we live in a most mu-
“ table scene : And have the fear of
“ To-morrow before your eyes. Not
“ the keenest discernment can ken
“ thro’ the second of a minute. To
“ keep within the reach of Mercy,
“ is the grand Concern, and supreme
“ Blessing of human life.

“ *My Converted ! or Condemn’d !*
“ farewell.”

Thus, Dear Sir, I speak to these
Gentlemen. I wish they do not rather
chuse to show their parts, than their
penitence ; and criticise my *Speech*,
instead of their own conduct. If
so, they demonstrate how very great
occasion there was of *it* ; tho’ it
proves ineffectual.

Most Yours,

LET-

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L E T T E R IV.

ON

P L E A S U R E.

Dear Sir,

OU seem to think, in your last letter, that our age is so far gone, as to be past recovery. I hope not. *Aviola*, a Consul in the time of *Gordian*, reviv'd on his funeral pile. I will not despair, but that *British* Virtue, now,
2
like

176 On PLEASURE.

like the *Phenix*, dying in its *Sweets*, may start up from its ashes, and re-assume its former glory. I shall therefore proceed a little farther.

I grant, that the *Man of Pleasure*, as well as the Good Man, has his joy. But their joys are very different. They differ not only in their objects, but their kind. Which is as yet a secret to *Them*; and, possibly, to You. Joy from temporals, is a Terrestrial Joy. And, like all things terrestrial, has a dreg in it. If you observe your own heart, you will find, that Joy from temporals, has ever somewhat of a gay inquietude, a disturb'd and tumultuous delight. Like some liquors, all in an unquiet ferment, and confusion, while they sparkle, and smile. Joy from Eternals, Joy, I mean, on spiritual accounts (*viz.*)
Mens

On PLEASURE. 177

Mens conscia recti ; or, a delightful hope of Immortality ; or, an humble persuasion of Divine Favour, &c. This Joy is Celestial, and, like a fine calm Summer's evening, is undisturb'd, placid, and serene. The first is a *Passion*, and that in the strictest sense ; we *suffer* from it, as well as *enjoy*. Nay, some have suffered from it even to Death. The latter seems rather to be, or to resemble, an *Inspiration*, in which the Divine cause takes away, or supersedes, our human infirmity. Therefore, by our Church, most properly stiled the *Peace of God*. Nor let *Centaur*s imagine, that this peace is occasion'd by the smallness of the Joy. No, *It passeth all understanding* ; and is, strictly speaking, a specimen, an actual part, of Heaven.

O

For,

For, indeed, the supreme happiness, and misery, of rational beings, thro' all variation of circumstances, and thro' every period of their existence, is of a piece, or of the same kind. Tho', perhaps, in no two periods of it, of the same proportion, or degree. Therefore, Heaven and Hell, how distant soever some think them, are *really*, tho' not *fully*, on earth. Where-ever, and whenever, their causes, that is, Virtue and Vice, exist, they will exist, in a measure correspondent to them. What then are the *good* and *bad*, but the wretched and happy? He, whose soul reposes on his firm trust in God, like the Halcyon that builds on the waves, if storms arise, may be toss'd, but not endanger'd. Or, grant the worst, those tumultuous billows that devour others, rock him to rest eternal.

When

When the good man lies down to rest, no fears from the dangers of the night break thro' his strong confidence in the Divine Protection. When he awakes, his first thought lays hold on Heaven; which gives, thro' the consecrated day, such a sweetness of aspect and deportment, such a force and firmness, to his felicity; that we may venture almost to say, *He cometh forth as a Bridegroom from his chamber, and rejoiceth, as a giant, to run his course.*

The *Man of Pleasure* has his little clouds at the brightest, the course of his happiness is retarded by a straw; and any considerable, scarce considerable, accident puts it quite to death. Not only the necessaries, or conveniencies, but the decorations, and superfluities of life, are *vital* to

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his sickly felicity. In any of them he may receive a deep or deadly wound. Whereas they are mere excrescences to the good man's happiness; and he has no more feeling in them than in his hair, or his nail: Nay his happiness is of so strong a constitution, that it can stand *real* calamities unhurt. Nor quits its *serenity* on the confines of the grave; which the Man of Pleasure but ill retains in the sunshine of life.

Of which strange inferiority one cause is very obvious. When all our hopes and fears are confin'd within this narrow scene, what an insupportable importance, what a tyranny o'er our passions, does this give it? what Demi-gods does it make our superiors, who can bestow, what we *most* value? we tremble before them.
What

On PLEASURE. 181

What Mountains does it make of little things, because the greatest in *our* inventory? we turn pale, sometimes die, at their loss. But, the first moment we take God for our Protector, and his precious promises for our chief Portion, our superiors, even Kings, shrink to men; and crowns imperial lose their lustre. Little things *are* little, and leave our hearts at rest. As a taper to the Sun; such the Sun to the *Glories that shall be reveal'd*. Looking to the close of the drama, we resume our native dignity; nor are longer over-aw'd on the stage, by our fellows; or, perhaps, our inferiors *behind* the scene. Nay, sometimes, *on* it too. When, like poor *Altamont*, they are forc'd to change their Plume for the warm cap of sickness; and are unbuttoning their

O 3

Buskins

Buskins on the bed of anguish, terror, and death.

And must this, one day, be the case? after having run the gauntlet of disappointing, painful, pleasures, and, for some years being afflicted with delights; to drop unregarded, unlamented, infamous, into punishment far greater, *for* the punishment they have already undergone—of human happiness what a dismal account is this? yet this is the true. Let us, therefore, enquire if it is not worse than *they* deserve.

Our *Men of Pleasure* affect much being *Men of Honour* too; that is, they are as proud, as they are dissolute: Or, in other words, they will not stoop to mean and little vices; they deal only in great. They scorn
to

to pick a pocket; but triumph in cutting a throat. If their immaculate *honour* is violated by word, look, or thought, then they trample all the Laws of Religion, Justice, and Humanity, without remorse. My *Enquiry* will join them together. But how shall I enquire? how shall I know the heart of these men? and That only can inform me right. Let us then consider what these mens *Prayer* would be, if they pray'd at all. For what is a Prayer, but addressing to some superior Power, the real desires of our hearts?

Thus then I will shew you an exact picture of their hearts. There was so masterly a copy of a capital picture of *Julio Romano*, taken by one of his scholars, that he swore it was his own original drawing. I

O 4 hope

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hope so to copy their hearts, that they shall imagine, that it is not I, but they themselves, that speak. The desires of their hearts, if cloath'd in words, would run to the following purpose.--But, *first*, this caution: Let not that offend pious ears, which passes in an impious heart; and which, for the sake of *piety* (tho', perhaps, not without some shock to it), is drawn out into light;

The PROFLIGATE'S PRAYER.

“ O Thou! whose Omnipotence is
 “ but a *second* attribute, and a
 “ proper servant to thy delight.
 “ Thou great Fountain of *Pleasure!*
 “ as *such* I adore thee. Pleasure
 “ alone makes me devout; and let
 “ Devotion advance my Pleasure.
 “ For I am not more devout, than
 “ modest;

ON PLEASURE 185

"modest; I ask not, yet, for Hea-
 "ven. Give me my Heaven on
 "earth. Let *Mahomet's* paradise de-
 "scend, and bless me on this side the
 "grave. Let my *Honour* too shine
 "before men; and let none see my
 "heart,--but Thee. *Noctem peccatis,*
 "*& fraudibus objice nubem.* Give my
 "Lusts a long and prosperous reign
 "over me; and let not Religion ap-
 "proach to hurt me. Lead me
 "into Temptation, and give me
 "strength to comply with it. And
 "deliver me from all evil, that may
 "mar my delights. Let me be (as
 "I have been) a brute while I live,
 "and an angel (if angels there are)
 "when I die."

"Is the good man shock'd at this?
 Yes; and the Profligate too. Few
 know the foulness of their own
 hearts.

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hearts. A famous Modern, when, in age he had lost his understanding, passing by a looking-glass, cry'd out in compassion, "*Poor old man!*" not knowing it to be himself: Thus the Profligate, at sight of this mirror, equally ignorant, no doubt will cry out in surprize, "*Horrid wretch!*" I answer, therefore, to the Question above, *viz. Is it not worse than they deserve?* That *Men of Pleasure*, themselves being Judges, deserve the worst.

In contrast to this (and sure it wants an antidote), accept that Piece of Devotion you desir'd on your Friend's account; and may it prove of some little service to him.

Devout

Devout THOUGHTS *of the* Retired
PENITENT.

“YES, blessed, ever blessed be the
“ Divine Indulgence for this.
How wanted, how welcome, this
“ Asylum? this Recess? Here earth
“ holds its peace; and Heaven’s
“ voice can be heard. Heaven’s
“ voice, if we listen, ever speaking
“ in the human heart. Here let me
“ commune with my so long-anxi-
“ ous heart, which has frequently
“ called on me for an audience,
“ and found me pre-engaged. Or
“ else, the rude world broke in on
“ our conference; and fatally push’d
“ it off ’till a farther day. Tho’
“ (shocking to consider!) tho’ a de-
“ pending Eternity often chid my
“ delay.

“ While

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" While the Noise of the world
 " beats its drum in our ears ; and
 " its Bustle, and Hurry, throws its
 " dust in our eyes ; who can hear
 " the soft whispers of Conscience,
 " or read the strong demands of
 " Reason, tho' written in capitals,
 " on the compos'd and disenchant'd
 " heart ? I now read, hear, and
 " tremble. I tremble at that, in
 " which I once triumph'd. I blush
 " at that, of which I, once, was vain.
 " Oh, *Pleasure ! Pleasure !* what art
 " thou ? The death of Reason. And
 " with Reason dies the whole Hea-
 " ven, as well as Character, of
 " man.

" The cloud now a little broken,
 " which wrap'd me up in night,
 " look round, my soul enlarg'd !
 " and say, where, or what am I ?
 " An

On PLEASURE. 189

“ An Immensity around me! an
“ Eternity before me! a Shadow,
“ my Pleasure! a Moment, my Time!
“ a Vapour, my Life! And shall a
“ Moment, Shade, Vapour, engage
“ all my Love? engross all my
“ Thought? Shall it bid an Angel
“ from Heaven wait my better lei-
“ sure? Bid the great Father of An-
“ gels defer his Call ’till To-morrow?
“ ---What, O my Soul! If He should
“ call no more!---Good God! If He
“ should call no more? If He should
“ leave thee to thyself?---Where,
“ then, is Hope? where, then, is
“ Man?

“ Man, desperate Man, the first
“ moment he sets up for himself,
“ and impatient of controul, takes
“ the rein into his own mad hands;
“ the first moment he is at liberty,
“ he

190 *On* PLEASURE.

“ he is the greatest of Slaves. How
“ shackled ! how harass’d ! how
“ starv’d ! In the midst of his riots,
“ what a Famine of joy ? None can
“ be wise for Time, that are fools
“ for Eternity. Dreadful independ-
“ ence ! the first moment man quits
“ hold of his Creator, he drops ! in
“ distraction, and ruin, how unfa-
“ thom’d his fall !

“ Out of that Deep, I call unto
“ Thee, O Lord ! Lord, hear my
“ voice. Dissolve the charm that
“ ties me down to Delights trifling,
“ terrestrial, infernal ; and give me
“ wings to rise into day, and reach
“ the things that belong to my peace.
“ Where is the Creature, which thou
“ hast made ? Where is the Heart,
“ which thou hast given ? This sink
“ of pollution ! this nest of all Vices !
“ it

On PLEASURE. 191

“ it could not come from thee. No, I
“ have snatch’d it out of Thy blessed
“ hand, and let it fall in the mire.
“ What is it to me, that *thy Mercy*
“ *is over all thy works*, since I am
“ *not* what Thou hast made ?

“ I have slept on a precipice, and
“ dreamt I was in Heaven. Slept
“ on its very brink ; tho’ Vengeance
“ frown’d over me, and Flames roar’d
“ beneath. What Horrors awake
“ me ! What a Gulph lies before
“ me ! What Mercy has sav’d me !
“ Where had I been, had I dy’d
“ Yesterday ? Oh, let this load, this
“ mountainous load, on my Heart,
“ sink me lower, and lower still,
“ in adoration that I live ! Had I
“ felt these pangs before, -- before I
“ had been reclaim’d, -- Thou, that
“ bearest up the pillars of the earth,
“ support

192 *ON PLEASURE.*

“ support my spirits!—Where had I
 “ been, if Yesterday had been my
 “ last? Where—oh where?—And
 “ eternal too!—*Eternal!*—O Lord,
 “ God Almighty! could thy Thun-
 “ der shake me more?

“ Thou glorious God, who makest
 “ the Thunder! let me climb above
 “ Creation; and soar into thoughts
 “ of Thee.—How I wander up and
 “ down, bewilder’d and benighted,
 “ thro’ the *boundless* of such a Con-
 “ templation? Where, what, who,
 “ how, art Thou? Source of all Be-
 “ ing! Centre of all Good! Great
 “ Antient of Days! before the birth
 “ of Time! beyond the comprehen-
 “ sion of Angels! Filler of Immen-
 “ sity! who lookest down on the
 “ highest; and the lowest dost sup-
 “ port!—support even me.

“ Support

ON PLEASURE. 193

“Support me while I labour at
“some idea of my God--but I la-
“bour in vain. Thou most obvious,
“and most occult! most present, and
“most absent of Beings! how much
“of Thee is *enjoy'd*? How little of
“Thee is *known*? I am *in* Thee,
“yet cannot find Thee. I can nei-
“ther go from Thee, nor to Thee.
“Clouds, and thick darkness are thy
“pavilion! Wonders passing won-
“ders, thro' the moment of *Time*,
“and the immense of *Eternity*,
“guard, and aggrandize, Thy tre-
“mendous Throne!

“Before *such* a Judge, O my Soul!
“art thou to plead thy cause; to
“pour out thy deep sorrows, and
“deeper sins; to tremble out thy
“complaint? Oh! let me annih-
“late myself before Him. Nor

P

“Wretch,

194 *On PLEASURE,*

“ *Wretch*, nor *Man*, nor *Angel*, is
 “ any thing in his sight, ’till he is
 “ nothing in his own. Who, Lord!
 “ ever thought on Thee, and was not
 “ confounded? And give me leave
 “ to add, Who, Lord! ever pray’d to
 “ Thee (as he ought), and was not
 “ blest’d? For which infinite mercy,
 “ from the first thrones in Heaven,
 “ to the meanest worms on earth,
 “ be pay’d all homage, praise, and
 “ adoration; constant, profound, ar-
 “ dent, and eternal!

PART II.

“ Are they that pray, blest’d? —
 “ But what is that to me? Dare I
 “ to pray? to whom is Prayer ad-
 “ dressed? Oh! how dreadful in Ma-
 “ jesty! more dreadful in Vengeance!
 “ Dreadful to the Blest’d above!
 “ more

" more dreadful to Man! more still
 " to the Sinner! what then to the
 " deepest in Sin? May not I then say
 " (as is said, Lord God Almighty, of
 " thy Blessed Self), *Hell is open before*
 " me; *Destruction hath no covering?*
 " Where then shall I fly? I cannot fly
 " from thy presence. I dare not
 " stand in it. Should I sink to the
 " centre, I am still in thy sight.
 " Even Darkness detects me! Even
 " Flight brings me nigh! Oh! Thou
 " that dost light the Sun, as a taper;
 " or tread it out, as a spark! Why
 " still in being, a Wretch ever de-
 " stin'd to pain? Oh! let me be
 " nothing; or, let me be Thine.

" And what a nothing, indeed,
 " am I? What a nothing, compar'd,
 " is Man?—Thou that inhabitest
 " Eternity! my foundation is in

196. On PLEASURE.

" the dust. Lord most holy! I was
 " conceiv'd in Sin. God most migh-
 " ty! what weaker than Man? Great!
 " Holy! Mighty! Three Persons and
 " One God! Creator! Redeemer!
 " Sanctifier! Three Benefactors, and
 " One Being! with what Indignation
 " must Thou behold a wretch of such
 " complicated guilt? a sinner to Thee,
 " to the public, and himself?

" And dare I then approach? The
 " presumption how great? --- But
 " greater to forbear. To sin is bad :
 " To despair is fatal. Oh! most
 " merciful Jesus! what refuge, but
 " in Thee! Yet dare I not meet thy
 " face: I come trembling behind
 " Thee. If I touch but the Hem
 " of thy Garment, I shall be whole.
 " Even dogs may eat of the crumbs
 " that fall from their master's table.

" -- For

" ---For that bountiful grant, what
 " adoration is due? with prostra-
 " tion profound, I cannot but adore.
 " ---What adoration is equal? I can-
 " not adore aright. Or could I;
 " I'm unworthy to lift an eye to thy
 " throne. *My* Incense has no odour;
 " *my* anthem, no praise.

" But thou, Lord, wide as the arch
 " of Heaven, dost extend thy com-
 " passionate arms to receive a re-
 " turning world. As the sands of the
 " sea are thy mercies, and (with hor-
 " ror let me speak it) my transgres-
 " sions. I have look'd on an un-
 " feeling heart, as a quiet consci-
 " ence: On a multitude of sinners,
 " as an apology for sin; And on
 " the fashion of the world, as a re-
 " peal of thy Laws. I have been
 " thankless, for what Thou hast most

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"bountifully given : Senseless, of
 "what Thou hast more bountifully
 "promised : Provoking, under the
 "greatest obligations : Peevish, and
 "impatient, under the smallest evils :
 "Riotous under thy judgments. And
 "by thy blessings, most unblest'd :
 "I turn'd them into poison ; and
 "by my prosperity was undone,

"I have studied iniquity as a sci-
 "ence : Been vain of distinction in
 "it ; and ashamed of my duty : I
 "have blush'd at the glance of a
 "man, and a man most mistaken ;
 "and set my face as a flint against
 "reason, and against Thee : I have
 "even borrowed infidel scraps for
 "the credit of the day ; and run in
 "debt for destruction : Time given
 "for repentance, I turn'd over to
 "folly ; and made the divine Mercy

I

"a

On PLEASURE. 199

“ a promoter of Sin. Nay, I have
“ sinn'd even beyond my power.
“ What schemes have I laid, which
“ thy goodness disappointed? How
“ many crimes have I committed,
“ which never came to pass?

“ With such overflowings of un-
“ godliness I quench'd thy blessed
“ Spirit. I have trod, with thy di-
“ vine Laws, thy precious Blood
“ under foot. All this, Lord! thou
“ knowest; and yet I still live: All
“ this thou hast seen; and yet hast
“ thou held thy peace. Thou hast
“ shorten'd thine arm; and curb'd
“ vengeance in air; tho' call'd for
“ (if daring *can* call for thy ven-
“ geance) to fall on my head.

“ How long, Lord! hast Thou
“ forborne me? And forborne when
“ thine

200 **ON PLEASURE**

" thine arrows went abroad : Tho'
 " I stood in the first rank of offend-
 " ders ; nor ever lifted up the shield
 " of devotion ; quite naked in sin,
 " My less vicious companions fell from
 " quent around me ; and dismal was
 " their fall. I wash'd off its me-
 " mory in the next welcome de-
 " bauch ; and the just cause of re-
 " morse but redoubled my guilt,
 " by admonitions unadmonish'd, by
 " thy mercies unsoften'd, by my own
 " sentiments unaw'd, by my own
 " conviction unconvinc'd, I censur'd
 " their conduct, and trod on in their
 " steps. I deplor'd their sad exit,
 " and posted on to my own : Be-
 " cause spar'd, when most obnox-
 " ious, I thought myself immortal.
 " In every path of Pleasure, in every
 " flight of ambition, what gay, san-
 " guine, multitudes of those born
 " after

"after me, and in every promise of
 "life to be plac'd before me, have I
 "seen rise, bloom, triumph, lan-
 "guish, decay, and die? What a
 "mystery of Mercy is this? And
 "what a miracle of madness am I?
 "Amid this mighty field of slaugh-
 "ter, am I still alive?---While I
 "doubt if I still live, I live on in my
 "crimes. Nay, my very repentance
 "increases the number. Repentance
 "so languid; so far short of my
 "guilt!

PART III.

"Lord! from that stupendous
 "height, towards which the Cheru-
 "bims lift up an eye in vain, bow
 "down thine ear, and hear.---O
 "Lord! hear me not. For what
 "have I to plead? what excuse to
 "cover,

“cover, what palliation to soften,
 “my guilt? Can my confession of
 “sin weigh aught in my favour? I
 “fear, not a grain: For wherefore
 “have I confessed my transgressions?
 “Because I could not conceal them.
 “Thou knowest even those, that are
 “unknown to myself. But then,
 “Lord! I have been tempted.---Yes;
 “and I have courted temptation.
 “Frail nature has seduced me.---
 “And have I not indulg’d my se-
 “ducer? Public example bore hard
 “on me.---And I rejoic’d in that
 “excuse. I have sinned with my
 “fathers.---True, but I have sinn’d
 “beyond them. What age for in-
 “dulgence has so loosen’d the rein?
 “And who, in such an age, has
 “rush’d farther in ill, than the
 “wretch at thy feet?
 “But

" But is there nothing in coun-
 " terbalance? no dawnings of good?
 " no pretensions, at least, to virtue,
 " to lighten the loaded scale? Yes;
 " I have been an advocate for vir-
 " tue---That I might remove all ob-
 " structions in vice. I have gone
 " to thy temple---But left my heart
 " behind. Nay, I have pray'd---
 " But wish'd not what I ask'd. I
 " have aim'd at humility---Out of
 " pride. I have given---But with-
 " out charity. I have been kind,
 " the very kindest of men---To gain
 " power of being cruel, as the most
 " malignant of foes. My devotion
 " to Thee has been absolutely de-
 " clin'd; yet never have I repented,
 " but of *omissions* in guilt: Nor
 " ever had a *darling* joy, but what
 " is the parent of my present grief.
 " On

“ On searching my own heart,
 “ that abyfs of corruption, I find
 “ there is hardly a virtue which my
 “ hypocrify has not worn, as a mask;
 “ hardly a vice which my presump-
 “ tion has not acted under it. By
 “ these abandon’d means bringing
 “ into discredit virtue the most sin-
 “ cere; and making more heinous
 “ the deepest of guilt: To the pub-
 “ lic a scarce less pernicious pest,
 “ than a fatal assassin to myself.
 “ Thus, Lord! all my pleas but in-
 “ flame my indictment; and seek-
 “ ing excuses, but discovers new
 “ crimes.

“ But, as I discover new crimes
 “ in myself by my own awaken’d
 “ reflection; by the gift of thy grace,
 “ I discover new goodness, new glo-
 “ ries, new wonders, in Thee. I
 “ have

ON PLEASURE. 205

“ have liv’d in darkness, in the sha-
“ dows of eternal death. I wrapp’d
“ myself up in the world. I saw
“ nothing ; but what had been bet-
“ ter unseen, what made me blind
“ to Thee. But now thy Divine
“ Attributes break in upon me, like
“ the morning ; and awake me to
“ thy presence. I see Thee in every
“ thing. And seeing, I adore. And
“ adoring, tremble.

“ Thine Attributes, at once, all
“ lighten upon me ; and strike me,
“ like him of *Tarsus*, thy less perfe-
“ cting foe ; they strike me to the
“ dust. Thy most awful Omnipre-
“ sence ; thy most incomprehensible
“ Glory ; thy most unbounded Wis-
“ dom ; exquisite Justice ; and in-
“ effable Goodness ! Goodness, how
“ ineffable ?

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“ ineffable? And to me, Lord! to
 “ *me* insupportable. That chief
 “ cause of my confusion! severe up-
 “ braider of my conduct! and ter-
 “ rible aggravation of my guilt! If
 “ thy Goodness thus pains me; what
 “ then will thy Vengeance? When
 “ thy Vengeance awakes (cover me,
 “ O ye mountains!) When thy Ven-
 “ geance awakes—Oh! Mercy! Mer-
 “ cy! Mercy!--Thou mighty to
 “ save! Oh! have mercy upon me!

“ And mercy thou wilt have, thou
 “ Father of all Mercies! of Mercy
 “ redundant, inexhaustible source!
 “ Thou wilt not condemn him, who
 “ condemns himself. Who trem-
 “ bles at his own tribunal. Who is
 “ scarce struck with more horror at
 “ Vengeance, than at Guilt. At
 “ *such*

" *such* Guilt! and to *such* a Master!
" whose bounties enabled me so
" signally to sin; and Who, my
" sin so provoking, so long over-
" look'd.

" But I repent. Lord! I repent.
" --- Yet how dry are these eyes?
" How hard is this heart? Strike
" thou the rock, and the waters flow.
" Let not him, who groans under
" his transgressions, groan under thy
" displeasure. Thou Giver, Guider,
" Lover, yea, Buyer, of Souls! and,
" at what a Price? Who dost hear
" the very thoughts of the wounded
" at heart? Hear, pity, spare! Nor
" let the Lord be angry, if I pre-
" sume to add-- Oh! spare thy pa-
" ternal tenderness, Oh save it from
" its aversion; its *strange work*. Ven-
" geance

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* geance is an alien to thy most amiable Nature. Ruin is a subversion
“ of thy most glorious Scheme.

“ Tho’ common sense has deserted me ; and a *legion* possess’d
“ me ; Tho’ I have contradicted my
“ own reason ; and fought my own
“ heart, which stood in defence of
“ thy laws ; Tho’ I have struggled
“ hard for madness ; and taken ruin
“ by force ; Yet let not compassion
“ be quite a stranger in Heaven.
“ Let not thine anger burn for ever.
“ Wherefore is the Lord angry, because
“ I am a sinner ? What else
“ can’st Thou forgive ? Because my
“ sin is great ? If pardon’d, the greater
“ thy Glory. Thy servant is wicked :
“ But still a servant. Thy son
“ a prodigal : But still a son. Tho’
“ a son’s duty has been wanting in
“ me ;

" me; lose not Thou, boundless Love!
 " all the bowels of a Father. Am
 " not I the work of thy hand? Do
 " not despise it. An image of thy
 " Majesty? Do not blot it out. The
 " price of thy Blood! Oh! cast it
 " not away. Shall things incom-
 " patible combine to my destruc-
 " tion? Can I be related to Ruin,
 " and to Thee? Let it be thy blessed
 " pleasure to reclaim, not destroy
 " me: If destroy'd, thy foe will tri-
 " umph: If reclaim'd, there is joy
 " in Heaven; and ten times ten
 " thousand will sing praise round
 " thy throne.

PART IV.

" But if I am pardon'd, who then
 " can be punished? What stains
 " can condemn, if an *Æthiop*
 " escapes?

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" escapes? The regions of darkness
 " are part of thy Creation ; and
 " horrors infernal were not made in
 " vain. My crimes, in themselves,
 " how great? as committed in de-
 " fiance of *Infinite Majesty*, they are
 " greater still. What then shall I say?
 " To what shadow of excuse shall I
 " fly?---Pardon, Lord! the weakness
 " of my reason, if I judge, or, ra-
 " ther, hope, amiss: Thine *Infinite*
 " *Majesty*, seems to plead for me:
 " Fain would I find an advocate in
 " *that* ; in that very cause, which
 " most heightens my guilt.

" For what, my Lord! am I? a
 " poor complex of littleness and va-
 " nity ; the very centre of Infirmi-
 " ties ; a combination of all causes,
 " that can call for thy compassion...
 " Frail flesh, and fleeting spirit! a
 " moth!

On PLEASURE. 211

" moth! a worm! a flower of the
 " field! To-day, and not to-mor-
 " row! at morning, and not at night!
 " not master of a moment! not a
 " match for a breeze! A dream! a
 " vapour! a shadow! a thing of
 " nought! posting thro' daily doubt
 " and danger, toil and trouble, into
 " trodden dust and ashes!

" Such am I! such was I made;
 " and made by Thee: And now,
 " Lord! wilt Thou make bare an
 " arm Almighty against me? wilt
 " thou lift up a bolt, that can crush
 " Creation, against its meanest
 " worm? (Oh! pardon what distress
 " compels me to plead) thine *Infi-*
 " *nite Majesty* declares against it:
 " That rescues the sinner, tho' it en-
 " hances the sin. Does not my mean-
 " ness disarm thy might? Is not the

Q 2

" great-

" greatness of the offended, the of-
 " fender's defence? I am, indeed,
 " unworthy, most unworthy, thy fa-
 " vour: But am I not unworthy thy
 " resentment too? Thou that fitteft
 " on the highest Heavens, and fee'ft
 " worlds infinite dance beneath thee,
 " as atoms in the Sun!--Wilt Thou,
 " oh! wilt Thou, not remember, that
 " I am but dust?

" Yes, Lord! Thou wilt remem-
 " ber it: Thou wilt remember thy
 " glorious Self; What antient days
 " resound; What wonders Love Di-
 " vine has wrought of old. For to
 " whom do I cry? Art Thou not
 " He, to whom none ever cry'd in
 " vain? Who created not, but to
 " bless: Commands not, but to pre-
 " serve: Nor punishes, but to reclaim.
 " Who has not more reliev'd, than
 " amaz'd,

"amaz'd, with his extremities of
 "Love! For, art thou not the same
 "Lord, who, tho' most offended,
 "as if thou wert the offender, be-
 "seeches *us* to be reconcil'd? Who
 "mourns over the impenitent? and
 "over the impenitent for sins against
 "Himself? And when his sorrow
 "can't prevail, even weeps in their
 "stead? Those tears, obdurate *Je-*
 "*rusalem* would not shed, did'st
 "thou not take to thy own blessed
 "lids, which overflowed at the bare
 "prospect of its ruin? Who, with-
 "out pious terror, without the
 "greatest astonishment; can think
 "on these things? Or, who, with-
 "out comfort, still greater than
 "that?

"Nor end our healing hopes of
 "comfort here; not only to beseech,

Q 3

"com-

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"commiserate, and weep, descend-
 "ed the Lord of Glory, and Eternal
 "Life, but to die. And what a death?
 "And after, what a life? A life of
 "compassions, without number, and
 "beyond measure: What a shining
 "progress, what a stupendous as-
 "cent in love? He meets the re-
 "turning Prodigal: Looks com-
 "passion on denying *Peter*: Rejects
 "not disbelieving *Thomas*: Admits
 "sinful *Magdalen*: Pardons the
 "taken Adulterers: And associates
 "to Himself, in Paradise (where An-
 "gels cast their crowns at his feet),
 "a Thief from the Cross. What
 "a marvellous and most adorable
 "climax is This? And is it possible
 "for Love to rise higher still? Oh!
 "let it rise higher, and reach even
 "me.
 "What

On PLEASURE. 215

“What am I, Thou most exuberant fountain of Love! that I should set a bound to such compassion as this? Can *Ocean* be repell’d by a single Grain on the shore? What a triumph of mercy to pluck the ruin’d from ruin? What an *Omnipotent* action to save the most lost? Tho’ Pleasure has fool’d me; tho’ Reason, Conscience, Heaven, nay and Earth too, in one scale, has been outweigh’d by a feather in the other; tho’, with *Esau*, I sold my birthright for nothing; yet, Lord! let these distractions of thought, these convulsions of heart, these pangs of the wretch, if not the prayer of the penitent, reach the foot of thy Throne: For his dear sake who spar’d not his most precious blood; Oh! spare, pardon, bless; yes, bless me, even me,

Q 4

“O

216 ON PLEASURE

“ O my *Father* ! Yes, Thou all-sur-
 “ rounding, all-pervading, all-suf-
 “ taining, and all-blessing Majesty
 “ of Heaven ! bless me, even me, O
 “ my *God* !

“ *Thou* ! who if thou openest thy
 “ mouth, it thunders : If thou lift-
 “ est thine eye, the Sun is dark :
 “ Who hast thy way in the whirl-
 “ wind ; and walkest on the wings
 “ of the wind ; Who fittest above
 “ the Heavens, and hidest thy foot-
 “ steps in the great Deep ! But (above
 “ all), whose superabundant Efflu-
 “ ence, whose Ocean of Love, over-
 “ flows the whole Creation ! add to
 “ these wonders one wonder more—
 “ the Forgiveness of Guilt like mine :
 “ Hear the suppliant voice, see the
 “ bleeding bosom, these throws, these
 “ throbs, of the most vile and aban-
 “ don’d

ON PLEASURE 217

"don'd—but most repentent, and
"heart-broken, of men.

"*Then, Lord! come the worst, I*
"will not complain. My joy shall
"burst its way thro' the frowns of
"the world; and the shadows of
"death. Then—" *Blessings and Ho-*
"mours, and *Glory, and Power, be to*
"Him who sitteth on the Throne, and
"to the Lamb, who nails sin to his
"Cross!"—Thus will I sing in spite
"of my groans! Thus will I sing
"with my last expiring breath!
"Thus will I sing for ever, and
"ever.

"Amen. O my Soul! Amen,
"Amen."

This, Sir, is that importunate, ar-
dent, persevering spirit of address,
which was suitable to the state of the
person

218 ON PLEASURE.

person from whom I borrow'd it. It may possibly (partly at least) suit some others. And I thought it inhuman, to gaze, so long as I have done, on the disease, without aiming at some expedient to mitigate its malignity. There is a sovereign balm in Prayer.

I know, Sir, there are certain Quietists in Devotion, Saints of great repose in Prayer, who may censure this, as too warm. But, when should we be warm, if not when our Eternity is at stake? shall we be warm in our Vices? and cool in our Repentance? Were our passions given for nothing? or given only as the servants of Sin? Is it not Heaven, but its reverse, that is to be taken by violence? I, therefore, drop this dispute, not only as *Unchristian*, but *Undeistical* too: For, if there is a God,

On PLEASURE. 219

God, all our affections are too feeble, all the wings of our soul are too few, to be put forth in pursuit of his favour; and being languid in Devotion, is, being solemnly undevout. If there is a God, he gave us our passions, as well as our reason; they, therefore, as well as reason, should assist in his service. And, indeed, reason without them, tho' it may loudly tell, will but lamely perform, our duty. How great a part of the Scripture must these mens kind of criticism explode? Poor *David* must break his harp lest it give offence. Even Angels have their passions, nor are any beings exempt from the *need* of them on this side the Throne of God. Whatever exemption some may fancy in their own favour, let us, who have seen the necessity of Devotion for others, not neglect our own. Nor,

I in

420 OF PLEASURE.

in the pride of instructing, lose the prudence of safety. To a young man, who is not yet settled in the world, I would say, You and I, my friend! lie under two disadvantages in this point: The world's example; and our own years. It is an undevout age: And will you not be surpriz'd to hear me say, that ours is an undevout period of life? Yet is it most certain, that there is a tenderness of heart, and a susceptibility of awe, with regard to God, as well as man, in youth, which, in most, is wanting afterwards. This want is an enemy we must fight, and fervent prayer, that *sword of the spirit*, is the best weapon against him. Prayer, because the most easy of duties, seems, with many, the hardest to be performed. It costs them so little pains, they think they may as well let it alone. Whereas, it is the supreme,

supreme, the great, mother-duty; all other duties, and virtues, are its progeny; are brought forth, nurs'd, nourish'd, and sustain'd by it. Devotion is the sole asylum of human frailty, and sole support of Heavenly Perfection: It is the golden chain of union between Heaven and Earth; keeps open the blessed communication.

---*Geminiq; facit commercia regni.*

CLAUD.

He that has never prayed, can never *conceive*, and he that has pray'd as he ought, can never *forget*, how much is to be gain'd by prayer.

Dear Sir,

Yours.

LET-

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L E T T E R V.

L I F E ' s R E V I E W .

The GENERAL CAUSE *of* SECURITY
in SIN.

THOUGHTS *for* AGE.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

RECEIVED

APR 11 1951

FROM

DR. J. R. OPPENHEIMER

TO

DR. L. B. LOEHLER

RE

LETTER OF APRIL 10, 1951

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LETTER V.

LIFE'S REVIEW.

Dear Sir,

IN this and the following Letter I shall touch on five points : *Life's Review* : The *General Cause of Security in Sin* : *Thoughts for Age* : The *Dignity of Man* : The *Centaur's Restoration to Humanity*. The three first are naturally suggested to me, by the world's wickedness, and our own ; and our advanced time of life. The fourth, viz. The *Dignity of Man*,
R is

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is naturally suggested by the notoriety of its reverse in those, for whose sake these Letters are principally written. For who can look on *Lucifer* in his abyss, without thinking of that height from which he fell? By which alone we can take any just measure of his calamity. And the fifth point, *viz.* The *Centaur's Restoration to Humanity*, is forceably impos'd on me by the transporting thought, that such an event is possible. Yet, should it take place, posterity will scarce believe it: *Annalium nostrorum laborabit fides.* L. FLO.

I begin with the *Review of Life*; and that, though chiefly for our own sakes, yet also for the sake of all our grey-headed Boys, as *Sudbury, Torrismond, Ironside, &c.* for tho' beasts of so gross a class as they choose

choose to rank with, scarce deserve to be brought to the Manage, yet Pupils not yet expelled the School of Life, ought still, if possible, to be taught the Lesson they have so long neglected; and I offer myself gladly for their tutor; though I fear they would prefer a *Tetanothrum** to an *Apotheosis*: their erudition will not make them at a loss to know what I mean.

There is nothing of which men are more liberal than their good advice, be their stock of it ever so small; because it seems to carry in it an intimation of our own influence, importance, or worth. We (for you approv'd it; *we*, I say) have bestow'd abundance of it on our Centaurs, which, I fear, will bring us in but

* A Medicine to take out Wrinkles.

R 2 little

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little thanks. Let us, therefore, return from abroad, come to ourselves; and see if our export of wisdom may not be wanted at home. We have censur'd the aged; are we not such ourselves? Is there no folly to be found, but at assemblies and masquerades? Or is folly not folly, because it hits our own taste? Let us lay the line to our own conduct: Let us drop foreign ware, and put ourselves into the scale.

Yes, my friend! let us make a short visit to our former selves. They are, indeed, great strangers; nor much to be lik'd: Yet is it a visit all should make who wish well to the future of life. Ask you, "What advantage from it?"---It is the only way of taking my Centaur's *

* In the Frontispiece.

advice,

advice, and *Knowing ourselves*. A man can see himself in retrospection only. When warm in action, he is ever looking on something else ; on his point in view : Or, if he could see himself, he could not judge aright, either of himself, or others. While warm in action, prejudices, and passions, excited by the *then* present objects, and incidents, corrupt his judgment. But in a cool review, he becomes rather a *By-stander*, than the *Party* ; and is patient of truth. His *then* former rivals are no longer rivals ; therefore he judges better of *Men*. His former points of view are no longer points of view ; therefore he judges better of *things*. He can judge, nay he cannot but judge, as impartially, of himself, as of the rest of mankind.

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Wisdom is the growth of experience: But experience is not the growth of action, but of reflection on it. In an active life is *sown* the seed of wisdom; but he, who reflects not, never *reaps*; has no harvest from it; but carries the burthen of age, without the wages of experience; nor knows himself old, but from his infirmities, the parish-register, and the contempt of mankind. And what has age, if it has not esteem?—It has nothing.

Starting, my friend! from the same goal, thro' different paths, which fever'd our fortune, not our affection, we have run our race; and now approach its end. Jaded with our long journey, the spur of ambition blunted, and our spirits off their speed, we are glad of rest. In which, Reflection

on the past is not only *useful*, but extremely *natural*. Look on the stormy sea, whose billows reach the clouds; then on the peaceful lake, where the feather, or fallen leaf, lies unmov'd; and you see the difference between the cool evening, and warm meridian of man. Reflection is as natural to one, as action to the other. Unactive youth, and unreflecting age, are equal blanks in the book of life. Man varies no less than those varying insects at which he wonders. In his morning, he crawls; long ere noon, flutters and flies; at evening, chill'd into languor, creeps into corners, lies hid, and sleeps; or, if awake, having but little ground before him, nor that the best; how naturally he looks back on the past? How naturally his winter's evening calls for its tale? and to self-love, what tale so natural

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as our own. How idle soever our *Tale* has been, if we can draw some *moral* from it, that will abate its insignificance, and give it some little weight by making us wiser for the future.

And want we not to be wiser? On how many fruitless friendships, ill-judg'd enmities, rash presumptions, cowardly despairs, unmanly flatteries, bold indecencies, idle schemes, airy hopes, groundless fears, opportunities lost, admonitions slighted, escapes unacknowledged, evils improved, blessings neglected, and trifles admired; on what a swarm of infirmities I look back with shame? How ambitious have we been in our attachments, not aware that all, most worth our ambition, we can give ourselves? How fearful of expences, not aware, that,

that, till it escapes the gripe, and takes its flight into some prudent use, money is not *wealth*; that it truly becomes *ours* only by our parting with it? How fond have we been of applause, not aware that human, separate from superior, applause, is the greatest vanity, as well as the most common pursuit, in life? How plainly I now see, that few things are more pernicious than too keen an appetite for applause, except a bold defiance of just reproach? That makes coxcombs; this, felons; this calls for detestation; that, for contempt.

How plainly do I now see, that our ignorance has been great? How often have we been so idle as to complain of our wants; that is, of our capacity of being happy: For, without wants, there would be no desires; and,

and, without desires, no gratification of them ; and, without gratification of desire, no happiness ; for human happiness, nay the happiness of all created beings, consists in nothing else.

What on retrospect appears to me to be the capital weakness of man ; is, that strange ascendant which his wishes have over his understanding : It is this makes a *Gentaur*. How often have we look'd on our wishes as infallible arguments for the certainty of what we desir'd ; when others saw it was an impossible point ? and of this capital weakness, a capital instance is, that dying men can scarce believe that they shall die. Are we not now as those yellow autumn leaves, which the first blast sweeps away ? Yet we seem to think, the
green

green bud hardly more tenacious of the stem.

On farther review, this is stranger still : Our friends are our strongest ties to life : When these are cut, what but folly can renew the charm ? What re-engage our disenchanting hearts ? and what, in my retrospect, is an object more obvious, or striking, than yonder ensigns of Death ? How the tyrant triumphs ? What numerous monuments rise o'er the cold bosoms that once warmly receiv'd us ? That shar'd our councils, our ambitions, our pleasures, and our hearts ? their epitaphs collected would make a volume : A volume how instructive, if read aright ? A friend's monument is a friend's legacy ; and a richer to the confederate, than any parchment can convey. What, for the most part,

is

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is human wisdom, but the melancholy growth of a bleeding heart? The thought of death is the directing helm of life, and he bespeaks a wreck, who lays it aside.

O my friend! how rapid the human march? Men are in haste; how they hurry o'er the stage? Where are those luminaries in every various walk of fame, in every kind of excellence, and renown, who most fir'd our ambition, and provok'd our envy? Are they not pass'd away as *April* shadows o'er the field; or, by the fire-side, a winter's tale? Are not those far-seen, shining lights gone out apace after one another, as little sparks in the fir'd leaf or paper, leaving us nothing but ashes behind? And in their ashes is there nothing to be found but Sorrow?

row? may we not light on a little
prudence in them?

Sorrow, indeed, predominates. Oh,
recent wound! Sorrow how just?
Whom lost we the very last moon?
---Lost *we*? that is vainly said:
Whom lost the public? Whom the
whole nation? Few has left it more
worthy all love, and esteem, than our
friend deceas'd*. He was made by
nature to be belov'd; and intitled by
virtue to be admir'd.

—— *Quem semper amatum,
Semper honoratum, sic Dii voluistis,
habebo.* VIR.

Well had it been, if we, like him,
had sought *esteem*; but we would not

* Sir J. S.

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pay the price. *Love* we thought would come cheaper; and seeking that, were in danger of losing both. The wise world will part with nothing, but by force. Love can't be compell'd, Esteem may. And, when it is, we lay in it, at the same time, the surest foundation for lasting love.

My retrospect shews me a transitory love of which we have been too fond. A love often bestow'd by great ones, on those whom they cannot esteem. This love, supposing it sterling, I (*stultius ego!*) return'd in kind: But I do not repent it. I may not repent of my virtue; For, my friend! there are two sorts of charity in the world, and which the greatest, is hard to say. We are bound in compassion, to help the poor to *live*, and the rich to *enjoy*; who feel a pain peculiar to themselves,

selves, that of being mock'd by abundance, which denies them their expected happiness; happiness in proportion to their purse. All I learn from such *ardent* lovers (for such generally they are) is, that it is dangerous to dip in most men below the surface, lest our curiosity should rob us of our good opinion of them. Much decorum, little homage, is requisite. My whole life tells me, that a just demand for *esteem* is sacred, but rare. We may well afford to pay it, when it *is due*. Nor must our *love* be withheld, where it is *not*. Universal love enjoin'd, is design'd as an antidote against reciprocal contempt; and as a discipline to human pride, which must stoop to love men in their infirmities and faults: Nor is it more our duty, than our prudence; how else could we hope *quantum* to *benefit* *ter*

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ter for our own, which both tell us of others faults, and bid us forgive them. For many of them we should not suspect, but from the whispers of their parallels in our own bosoms. And therefore, by not forgiving them, we condemn ourselves. If, then, we would be forgiven by ourselves, or others, we must forgive. A truth for which I thank my present Review.

What I like least in this survey, for fear it should prove our own case, is this; I find old men apt to think well of themselves, not because they fly vice, but because vice is fled; repute themselves virtuous, because free from boys offences; set down impotence for victory; and triumph, because they have not fought, because they meet no foe. And what makes me even tremble, is, I see some, who, blame-

blameless in youth, are overtaken by folly when in years, and (of all fighs the most deplorable!) I see them dragg'd by their white beards into the foulest enormities. Faults which are the natural growth of the distinct periods of life, may meet with some toleration: But the monstrous growth of vices out of season no man spares: Because the hot-beds of *Lucifer* only can raise crimes, in which nature has no hand.

Heaven avert from us such an end !
 For, far from blameless was our begin-
 ning. In our early days (call'd the
 days of innocence), we had our little
 villainies; our vice in miniature : As
 years and temptations increased, in
 years less ripe, than in iniquity, we
 were no petty criminals, before we
 were men. We wish'd, indeed, for
 S wisdom ;

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wisdom ; but what wisdom would have avoided, we made our favourite choice ; what wisdom would have chosen, we bid wait till to-morrow. Frequent were our quarrels with our faults ; but rarely push'd on to a parting. Pleasure had its charms, and Virtue its efforts ; and sometimes, in a passion, threw its Rider. But triumphs of passion are but short : No rebukes so powerful as those from our own conduct. Affords not this, then, a strong caution for the future ? The distempers of the past periods of our lives are the best antidotes for those to come.

Retrospection informs me, It was, *now*, open war with our Enemy ; *now* perfect peace : How easy Sin sat on our hearts ; and call'd itself spirit, wisdom, any thing but what it

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it was? When some merciful discipline awak'd us from our trance, we fought; and we conquer'd: But what was our conquest? such as rather marr'd our wrong enjoyments, than wedded us closely to the right. We *call'd* the right our beloved, our spouse; but often committed adultery against it; thus losing the joys both of the sinner, and the saint: So motley a creature is man: As mutable, as God is fix'd. Ours, indeed, was no uncommon case: But others faults are not our absolution. An absolution it is however, with which many are content: Tho' his Holiness could scarce give his saints one more ineffectual and vain.

Who is he, my dear friend, that can absolve us, or condemn?—Look thro' thy whole past life, and an-

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fwer. What year, nay, what day,
 has pass'd unimpower'd to vouch for
His clement, and absolute reign? See
 I not, in numberless instances, the
 naked hand of Providence stretch'd
 out, as it were, on this side the clouds,
 pointing us to Good? Now, shewing
 how little this world can give, by
 pouring on us the full enjoyment of
 it; to turn our hearts on a better.
 Now, shewing us, by the calamities
 of others, how much we may suffer
 in this world; to keep us in awe, tho'
 ourselves were unhurt. Now, break-
 ing to pieces all our own schemes,
 and raising our happiness out of their
 ruins; to teach us humility, grati-
 tude, and on whom to rely; shew-
 ing us, that most of our triumphs are
 errors; and our disappointments,
 escapes. Now bringing us, when
 most secure, to the brink of the
 grave;

grave; to repress presumption. Now snatching us from it, when past all human help; to kindle devotion, and forbid the pain of despair. Now defeating us in spite of all our wisdom; now blessing us in spite of all our folly: Blessing, to sweeten life; the contrary, to wean us from it. And thus, in both worlds to provide for our welfare, as far as the nature of humanity will admit.

What a glorious image of Divine Goodness is this? The wisest cannot pay half its due in their highest opinion, nor the best in their profoundest acknowledgement, of it. And can we not shew as inglorious a portrait of human weakness in ourselves? How are our two different paths of life equally strewn'd over with follies? with follies thick as Autumn leaves!

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but not thick enough to hide our faults: So numerous both, that I am quite disinclin'd to look longer backward; and hasten, for refuge, into some change of thought. And here, shall only add, that man overlooks the most instructive book in his study, if he reads not himself.

And now, I fear, you will say, that how *useful*, and *natural*, soever Life's Review may be, yet you can find but little pleasure in it. In it there is no pleasure to be found, but what has cost us some pain; but what we have fought our way to, through nature's perverse byas, and besieging temptations. Unbought pleasure is not the growth of earth: This is a militant state; nor must man unbuckle his armour, till he puts on his shroud: For the most victorious
veteran

veteran may meet with a defeat. Nothing in Life's Review can give delight, but what we may call our trophies, or spoils taken in war. All else is vanish'd as a dream.

What have I said? vanish'd as a dream!—Would to God it was! 'tis *not*! Far from it! Every moment is immortal! Every moment shall return, and lay its whole freight, nothing lost, its every whisper, every thought, before the Throne: The throne of Him who sent it to man on that commission; and commands it back, at the stated day, to make its report; to be register'd in eternity, for the perusal of Angels, and the justification of their King. Tell our gay triflers, that there is no such thing as a trifle upon earth. Can any thing be a trifle that has an ef-

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fest eternal? Tell them, tho' they are so well assur'd, that there is nothing serious upon earth, that *Time*, to man, is, in some respects, a more serious season than Eternity: That *his* Eternity is absolutely the creature of Time: That 'tis foul, or fair, rejoices, or laments, as Time, omnipotent Time! (that trifle which they throw away) ordains its fate. If they doubt it, let them ask their jovial companion, who died of their happiness last night.

Many, my friend! have made a worse, many, a better, use of time than we have done: Many have been more criminal; many, more innocent. But most men imagine that innocent, which has a *negative* guilt. An idle day is a guilty day, in a life so short and precarious; with more than human thought can carry,

carry, incumbent on it. There are not more spots in the Sun, than in the life of a Saint.

What then are we?—O my friend! at half a glance thro' life, I perceive, that, tho' we have made a shift to creep out of the *Augean Stable*, yet have we not scaled the temple of Virtue: Tho' we made the choice of *Hercules*, yet we wanted his strength: Tho' we, sometimes, lop'd one head of the *Hydra*; yet, too often, seven shot up in its stead. Whereas, on the contrary, they that have been long tofs'd by folly, when once landed on a good life, should *burn their ships*; as *Cæsar* once burnt those of his legions on the *British* coast: I mean, that the warmest Resolution should destroy the very desire of embarking

harking in ill; and so render a return impracticable.

Such, then, being our feeble attempts, so slender our pretence to wisdom, it becomes us to give those, whom we have so freely treated, their revenge. To confess, that, tho' we are not quite *Horizontal*, yet neither are we quite *Upright*; and, tho' we have set up for Reformers; yet are we not, altogether, Men.

A *man*, my friend! is a glorious being; a great rarity; there are but few to be found. A *man* is an exalted character, doubly great; he is an hero, and a king. Few kings are so great as to reign over their own hearts. Few heroes so victorious, as to drive *dominions*, *principalities*, and *powers*, before them. Both these meet
in

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in a *real man*: He ranks, in *reality*, but a little lower than the Angels: Nor long, so low.—O friend! man is a wonderful being! Anon, I will tell thee what thou art; and (mark what I say), I will surprize thee with thyself.

At present, only This.—Dare we say, that we are arriv'd at the character I have mention'd? No. Dare we say, It was not in our power? No.—Why then this cowardice in a *possible* Hero? Why this disloyalty to himself, in a *possible* King? Whence this reproach to reason, and immortality? Whence this inglorious, and absolute desertion from our godlike selves? Sounds that too high?—In whose image were we made? I foresee your objection; I grant that image is impair'd: But I quit not
my

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my point; I dare affirm, that beings which are free, rational, and immortal, may be Gods in due time, thro' Divine Grace, if they please.

How deplorable our distance from it? Whence this *unmanly* defect? Know we not that, unless our conduct is that of a man, it had been better for us, if a lower species had fallen our lot? Why were we call'd into being? What we have enjoy'd already poorly 'pays our mother's pain, and our own. Wouldst thou repeat thy part in the comedy? act it o'er again? Wouldst thou be re-jumbled in this rough *Thespian* cart, dragg'd on by those two skeletons, half-starv'd *Hope*, and panting *Expectation*, thro' bad roads, *now* worse and worse, and thy fellow-strollers in a constant conspiracy against both thy

thy pay, and thy applause ; how well, ~~sooner~~ thy part is performed ; how great ~~sooner~~ thy indulgence is to them ? -- Thou wouldst not. Here and there, indeed, we might pick up a lucky hour, *aliquo notanda lapillo*, that might make us smile again. But nature, and indeed, reason, starts back at the Whole. : If we should find a small pearl in one oyster of a million, it would hardly make us fishers for life.

Wouldst thou, then, cease to be ? -- No, nature shudders at it. That horn of the alternative wounds more than the former ; If so ; our wishes, as well as our nature, push us into Eternity. And shall we fear, what we wish ? Fear it we must, unless we provide a good reception there. We have provided for the to-morrow,

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row, and to-morrow was not satisfied. If we provide for eternity, our satisfaction will be full. We have provided for many Years; for more than we shall ever see; but not for those which will never end.

How great the dishonour, my dear fellow-criminal! in us, who were not blind to the grand futurity, were not cold to the Divine Rewards; to let the glowing thoughts of immortality so far mingle with the dregs of sense? Is not this, with the wings of an eagle, to drop into the mire? There lies the *Pleasure* of which the world is so fond. That bane of private Property, that presage of public Slavery, that sure Annihilation of a rational Creature, and Creation of a Wretch eternal. It has robb'd Earth
of

The GENERAL CAUSE, &c. 255

of more lives, and Heaven of more Souls, than the body collective of all other evils discharging their whole quivers on man.

Our weakness, and our security under the consequences of it, is no uncommon case. Blushing I look round for its fatal Cause. And do I not find it, where, if found, it must increase my confusion? Do I not find it in the great *Goodness* of God? If so; how must that reproach and brand the deep ingratitude of man? And, I think, I find it there.

The GENERAL CAUSE of SECURITY in SIN.

FOR, consider, my good Friend! what can he do that ventures to continue in Sin? He cannot defy the
Wrath

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Wrath Divine; that is, not in man.
 He cannot acquiesce under the ter-
 nor of its consequence. He must there-
 fore presume on divine mercy. "I
 know myself worthless, yet earth
 pours its blessings. I know my-
 self worthless, yet Heaven buys
 me with its blood. What is to be
 feared, what is not to be hoped,
 from such a God? Be my crimes
 what they will, some yet un-
 revealed expedient will be found for
 my safety. For God is Love."
 Thus, possibly, he may reason: And
 thus, at once, do two strange things:
 Cite Scripture to his ruin; and make
 the mercies of God fatal to man.

God, indeed, is Love: But shall
 man therefore be a monster? And
 a monster in the judgment of all
 men? All confess that there is an
 ad-

admirable consent between the precepts of virtue, and the sentiments of our common reason. All confess that virtue receives a constant approbation from the uniform verdict of our consciences. All confess, that virtue practis'd, brings in the greatest happiness to society: He, therefore, that is not virtuous, can give himself no satisfactory account, why he was born either with reason, or conscience, or a desire of happiness: Since he has nothing of what they all demand from him. And, therefore, he must appear an unaccountable being; that is a monster, not only to others, but himself.

This is more than enough to make vice our aversion, tho' God were Love to that absurd degree, which our folly may fancy, and which our vice

T

most

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most certainly wishes, and wants. But there is no *such* Love in Him: It is blasphemous to suppose it. God is Love, and therefore---what? That which many may least expect---therefore God is *terrible*: For whence arises His marvellous Love to man? Of man He has no need; the Divine Happiness is complete: In man He sees no merit; He knows we are worthless, as well as we ourselves: But then, far better than we, He knows that we are---*Immortal*. That therefore (most interesting, and most alarming thought!) that therefore, we *must* suffer, or enjoy, for ever.

Hence, be most assured, my Friend! his regard for man. Hence, for a worm, to-day crawling out of the earth; and to-morrow more despicably still, crawling into corruption;
tion;

tion; his Compassion, his Solitude,
his Councils held on high; and all
the wonders of his Love. Wonders?
—much more than wonders to man;
—they are wonders in Heaven! They
strike with amazement the first An-
gels of light.
—And thou, O man, conscious of thy own meanness,
canst thou scarce believe that Divine
Indulgence should thus abound? Con-
sider: God, indeed, call'd us out of
the *dust*. But He call'd us into an
eternity: An eternity, henceforward,
commensurate with his own: And
shall not his Concern be commensu-
rate in degree, bear a proportion to
his gift? Shall not one shew as much
of the Great God as the other? As
He has made us *Immortal*; he has
made us also *Endanger'd*, creatures.
Creatures that must, necessarily, stand

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the most important, and incomprehensible consequence of their own doubtful conduct for ever. Does not this abate thy surprize at such abundant indulgence? It must, if *God is Love*, and vouchsafes to look on us in the mention'd light. In that light He looks on us. Thence his more than paternal Bowels of Compassion for the most unworthy of men. Thence his Omnipotence exerted in giving proofs of his Love.

But why, say'st thou, is this love terrible? Is not that love *most* terrible which tells us we are in danger of being eternally undone? and *this* love tells us so; for (as I conceive) it never had existed, had not that been our case.

How

How deep, then, and deplorable, is their mistake, who presume to sin, because God is so good ; when God is so good purely because He knows that presumption will be their ruin ? Who presume on impunity for Sin, because God is so good ; when God is so good, purely because He knows that Sin, and Impunity, are incompatible ? Such men make a demonstration of their danger, the basis of their Security ; and fear nothing, because an Omnipotence, that is solicitous for their welfare, gives proof that He is apprehensive of their destruction.

Such men reason ill. Still worse, experience cannot convince them. What their experience of every day, every hour proves to be true, they will not believe : They *doubt*, if they shall be (not to use a harsher word)

condemn'd for their Sins. Yet they *know* that they shall die. Now, as I take it, their death is a prelude, and assurance, of their future condemnation: For, if Beings, originally immortal, die for another's Sin, can it be doubted, but that they shall be condemn'd for their own? And that death (which is a demonstration that Sin shall not escape unpunished) is unavoidable, they are convinced by their *Senses*: Unless our Centaurs, therefore, lay aside their senses, as well as their reason, for the future they must forego hopes too frequent, and too sanguine, among them. Nor longer turn a proof of Immortality into a presumption on impunity; Heaven's indulgence, into destruction; and gather poison from the Tree of Life.

I know

I know not, my friend! if others have urged these arguments, with regard to the cause of God's great indulgence to man, and the certainty of punishment for Sin; but to me they appear of a very weighty and affecting nature. There are some truths of the last moment to men, which, at first aspect, have somewhat surprising in them: They require, and well deserve, our second thoughts.

I will give you two; one from Scripture; one from my own thoughts: *With the Lord there is mercy, therefore shall He be feared. — With man there is immortality, therefore shall he tremble. — Tremble at himself! Tremble at his own power, which can give what colour he will to a whole eternity. Tremble*

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at his own glory ; that he has Angels for his guard ; and an Almighty for his friend. Yes, tremble at all that might incline him to triumph : These grandeurs, that inspire presumption, increase danger : Are magnificent assurances that he may be plunged beyond hope ; be lost past retrieve.

God, indeed, forbids our despairing. But not because his Love will save us in our Sins ; but because despair stops all effort at amendment ; and without it his Love desires our welfare in vain. His Love is such, as to give us encouragement, and support, in every thing, but Sin : Such, as to support our spirits amid the ruins of a falling world ; but not under the cloud of one unrepented guilt.

how to it : now long grow now 'odt

from

This

-This shins light on a part of Scripture, which has a cloud on it in some eyes; and with others quite ruins its credit: *Work out your Salvation with Fear, and Trembling*: A strange text to those, who fear and tremble at nothing so much as at a disappointment in their lusts. Our Salvation must be *work'd out*: Wishing, and willing, will not bring it; hoping, and confiding, will not procure it; it will not come by chance; no, nor by gift, and infusion. It must be work'd out with *Fear*; because fear is the strongest guard of diligence, without which, this work cannot go on; and with *Trembling*, lest we should fail in this important work; lest we should think too lightly of the Divine Justice; and lest our very confidence should betray us, even tho' we were good men: For good
men

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men have fail'd purely from a good opinion of their own state. For a good Opinion begets Security; Security begets Negligence; and Negligence, Temptation; and Temptation, a Fall: And (if unrepented) a Fall into that state, where our *first* wish will be, that we never had been born; and (worse still!) where there is no *last*. Pain is sometimes so great even *here*, that we lose our senses; *there* it will be far greater; and (how terrible to say!) our senses will *not* be lost.

THOUGHTS *for* AGE.

ON the bank of that state we, *now*, stand: That post of wisdom, if ever men are wise: Which is the reason why they wish it may be long before they arrive at it: For folly is
the

the favourite of mankind: And is it not our own? Tho' there we stand, we scarce believe it; so much our wishes obstruct our belief: Or, believing, scarce know what being *there* means; so much familiarity takes away our attention; and robs things of their power to strike strong on our minds. *Eternity* has so often pass'd our lips, that it has forgot its way to our hearts. Did it enter there, would it not extinguish every earth-born passion in it? Yes; as the Sun, the smallest spark of fire.

Tho' we stand on its awful brink, such our leaden bias to the world, we turn our faces the wrong way; we are still looking on our old acquaintance, *Time*; though, *now*, so wasted and reduced, that we can see little more of him than his *wings* and
his

268 THOUGHTS for A. G. B.

his *scythe* : Our age enlarges his wings to our imagination ; and our fear of death, his *scythe* ; as *Time* himself grows less. His consumption is deep : His annihilation is at hand.

Should we not then turn us round, and look on eternity ? That glorious home of all that survives, and our shines the Sun ; that Kingdom of Souls Immortal ! Of Immortal Souls, *Time* is only the maturing womb ; from eternity they wait their *real* birth. Are we, my Friend ! matured ? Or shall we prove abortive to the world of glory ? If we were mature, why tarry here so long ? By protracting life, Heaven shews not its favour to those that are fit to die. Is not, the business of our day undone, the cause why we are suffered to sit up so late ? To be so long on our
weary

weary legs, after the common hour of human rest? I fear it is. I much fear we are permitted to live, purely because---we do not deserve it.

Is it not, (my languid fellow-traveller in the deep vale of years!) high time to be wiser? lest the greatest of curses should fall on us, that of being wise too late: Which is the most emphatical definition of a Fool. The world is worn out to us; and we are worn out to the world. The world, which knows its own interest, quits us, as rats a ruin'd house; if we knew ours, should we not quit the world, as bees an exhausted flower? We can make no more honey of it; its sweets are gone. Where are its formerly sweet delusions, its airy castles, and glittering spires? Are we not left, on a lonely, barren, briery heath, to grope
out

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out our weary way, thro' the dusk of life, to our final home? Shall not the dissolv'd enchantment set the captive free? Are we *Torrismond's*, or *Sudbury's*? Shall our dotage rivet our chains, when kind nature would knock them off? To speak a language even Centaurs may understand, "A last card, well play'd, may yet win the game."

Consider; are we scheming still? stretching out a trembling hand, which wants to be supported, to grasp at the nothing that comes next? Any thing now gain'd would rather mock, than enrich us; can any thing enrich, that cannot be enjoy'd? Grasp at new *faculties*, and new *powers*, if thou can'st find them, or new objects will only laugh us to scorn. But hadst thou even *those*,
if

of the value of things is in proportion to our term in them, their price at our market should fall very low.

It is a good thing to know when we have *all*, and to laugh at that cheat *more*, which is ever stealing our hearts. But it is as uncommon, as good. Hence, seniors are milking the world after it is dry. Is it not a shame that we should be gleaning sublunary *straws*, when our harvest of life is over? hoping an after-crop in our stubble? Tho' called to *diadems*, where harvest is perpetual; where an harvest, more than golden, profusely crowns an eternal year?

As to the pass which is so much fear'd; the dark, subterranean entry to future life; into which our weak imagination peeps, and starts back, as

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a child at a shadow ; all thanks to the blessed Gospel, we know what will light us up a lamp in it, and lessen its formidable gloom. I have seen a Death-bed, the reverse of poor *Albani*'s, where the bystanders were the greatest sufferers, and the King of terrors, by christian patience, was overmatch'd. The power of Religion shone out without a veil ; nor could any rising suspicions of Hypocrisy dim its Lustre. In such Scenes as these the human heart is no longer invisible to man ; and a glimpse of Heaven is discovered in such a sight.

We know what can make us sleep sweetly in the dust : What can smooth the rough transition ; soften death into a sort of translation, which
inter-

interrupts not (blessed be God!) our existence; nor our peace. In peace have many dy'd; and, therefore, 'tis certain, all *may*. The whole secret for obtaining that peace is an absolute resignation to the most High; which (as hard a task as it seems to some) at the bottom is no more than owning him to be God. And a contrary conduct (as little as 'tis consider'd) has atheism, partial atheism, in it. It is questioning some of his Attributes, tho' not denying a God. May that peace be thine! My heart beats with ardor for thy present peace, and future bliss. May I share it with thee! What a poor broken embrace, what a sad fragment of friendship, is that which ends at the grave? Such a transitory tie gives a second dart to death; and a double dissolution to

U departing

departing man. That of soul and body scarce more severe.

Would to Heaven! that all friendships were, *evidently*, friendships of immortal men. Such, I mean, as gave proof of their having each others *eternal* interests at heart. Modern, at least, fashionable, friendship flows from a polluted source; it tastes too strong of Earth; without the least tincture of *Man* (as above described); without the least spirit of *Immortality* in it. Nay, worse; it often springs from causes that will not bear the light; and resembles the dark streams of *Alpheus*, and *Arethusa*, that mingle under ground: It should rather resemble *Eridanus*, which is said to flow from Heaven.

How

How many have we of these subterranean attachments? What is it ties our Centaurs together in so long a *string*? --- Leaping together the same barriers of the decent, and the just; ranging the same forbidden grounds; gorging at the same manger; neighing the same inflammatory tune; or being daily rid, and sorely gall'd, by the domineering insolence of the same inflam'd mistress.

Since such their accomplishments, I hope to levy a *Lapithean* infantry sufficient successfully to carry on the war now open'd against them. --- As *Chiron* blew the trumpet which call'd the *Greeks* to the siege of *Troy*; I hear there is a modern *Chiron*, who sounds as many instruments, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did to summon his ido-

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laters ; and that he raises forces, and ceases not to carry on the war at a vast expence. Doubtless he was typified of old by him who is said in *Virgil* ;

Ære ciere viros, martemque accendere cantu.

For my own part, my Friend ! I fancy my campaign will soon be over. I have frequent pains : And, I think, I hear the Master call. If so, should we not leave this world, though not yet admitted of the next ? Have we not been, thro' life, anxiously providing one year for the next ? And shall we grudge to pay half that pains for an Eternity ?

Consider, my *Immortal* Friend ! should we not leave the world, before

fore the world leaves us? It is dismal to be left. There is a noble absence from Earth, while we are yet on it: And there is a nobler intimacy with Heaven, while we are yet beneath it. If our affection flies thither, we shall be welcom'd by superior Beings, and not be missed by men, who delight in novelties; or, if missed, admir'd the more for being *once* in the right. They must be somewhat out of this world, who would be deep in the concerns of the next: And is it not time we should be so? Till the business of life (as 'tis call'd) is over, its real business is rarely begun: Nor always then. Age is apt to carry its allow'd title to repose too far: Age is the most busy period of human life. But its transactions are not with men. Therefore that absence above mentioned is most fit for us. It is a

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sort of third state between this world and the next. How proper then for the reception of those, whose term is out, here, according to the common age of man?

And can it be hard for us to lay this world aside, since they that have far'd best in the world, have only the fewest objections against it. Is it not an old tragi-comedy read over and over, which by no means,

----*Decies repetita placebit?* Juv.

To speak in the licentious stile of comedy, Man is a mule, of mix'd origin, of Heaven and Earth; Earth has had more than its share of us; give Heaven the rest: And that for a *double* reason. All know that hope
is

is life's cordial : It works miracles ; without happiness it makes men happy. What have been all the pleasures of our former years, but joyous prophecies, and bold promises in the name of to-morrow ? Worldly *Hope* in age expires. If he provides not another hope, a man of years, and a man of misery, mean the same thing. Therefore the same steps are to be taken whether we would sweeten the remaining dreg of life, or provide a triumph for eternity.

The worldly wishes, which an old man sends out, are like *Noah's* dove ; they cannot find whereon to light, and must return to his own heart again for rest. His natural, and, perhaps, most allowable and proper wish is for respect. But respect for age is a *Virtue*. I need say no more to con-

vince him how little of it he must expect: And, indeed, he but ill deserves it from others, who, by doating on the world, denies it to himself.

When infirmity drives the world from us, or disease confines us to our chamber, shall we not be all alone with the great Father of spirits, and Searcher of hearts? Is it not worth while a little beforehand to practise our Lesson, that we may be the better prepared to sustain such an interview? Our wisdom cannot add to the days, but it can lighten the burden of life; and lessen the terrors of death. Death forgot in youth is folly; in age, madness. With regard to that King of Terrors, how many in years borrow the security of youth; for it

is

is impossible it should belong to them. Happy they ! whom death, when he comes, shall find at home ; his visit will have less of terror in it. Out of pure decency to the Dignity of human nature, of which the decays and imperfections should not be exposed, Men in years, by recess, should fling a veil over them, and to the world be a little bury'd, before they are interr'd. An old man's too great familiarity with the public is an indignity to the human nature, and a neglect of the Divine. A greater intercourse with it than the calls of duty and virtue demand, is indecent, irreligious, and contemptible ; speaking acquiescence in contempt, dotage on the world, and oblivion of Eternity. His fancying himself to be still properly one of this world, and on a
com-

common foot with the rest of mankind, is, as if a man getting drunk in the morning, after a long nap, lifting his drowsy lids at sun-set, should take it for break of day.

But grant him to be still of this world; grant him all it can give; What is this world, but a machine play'd on us by our *great enemy* for the dissipation of human thoughts, whose scatter'd rays must be collected, as it were, to a focal point, in order duly to warm our devotion; and set a pious heart on fire? And can any happiness subsist in age without piety? Impossible! Its intimacy with the world, is not for the pleasures it can give; they are past; 'tis purely to dislodge the thoughts of death, which intrude at that season; that

that is, it is purely to decline the pleasures of Heaven.

Why, my Friend! is our day of Trial extended beyond the expiration of the common Term? Is it not indulg'd to the great need our past conduct has of it? And shall our folly reverse the kind intention of that Divine indulgence to us? Shall it set us farther from our God? I am never so strongly struck with the weakness and depravity of man, as when I see grey hairs playing the fool. Hope, which in other evil appearances supports our spirits, fails us there. What can shock common sense, what can create amazement, if not the failings that would dishonour youth, in those that are miraculously alive after the stated period of human life? This is an outrage

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to

to Reason, beyond the boldness of the Desperado that confounds us most : This outdares the Felon repeating his crime, not only under the gallows, but with the cord about his neck. Where is that world into which you and I were born ? It is under-ground ; and a generation of strangers are dancing over our coevals long since in the dust. Where is that world into which we shall be born ? Far, far above the Sun, if, while we *are* beneath it, we behave ourselves like men. But if this life was our only concern, consider, that nothing but being wiser, that is better than those born after us, can possibly rescue the decays of age from aversion and contempt.

Fain would I have my pen of some service to the aged, now my nearest relations,

THOUGHTS *for* AGE, 285

relations, those of blood are no more.
To the former am I related by like
date, duty, interest, concern, and
above all

---*Nunc ipsa pericula jungunt.* Ov.

Still eager in worldly pursuits, warm
in the chace of shadows, shall we
rush, as down a precipice, and leap
plumb into the jaws of extempore
death?

No, let us halt in our career;
pause on the brink; and provide for
our eternal Peace. Can I better ex-
press my love than by pressing it on
thee? I press it strongly. And know,
my Friend! that Heaven, and (as I
have shew'd thee) a most indulgent
Heaven, joins my pathetic wish; and
Angels, ardent Angels, say Amen.

286 THOUGHTS *for* A G E.

And what want they ? (mark it well),
they want nothing but thy own concurrence to crown their wishes for thy welfare.

Dear Sir,

Yours.

LET-



LETTER VI.

The DIGNITY *of* MAN.

The CENTAURS RESTORATION *to*
HUMANITY.

The CONCLUSION.



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LETTER VI.

The DIGNITY of MAN.



ERE, Sir, I enter on that elevated theme, *The Dignity of Man.*

Major rerum mihi nascitur ordo.

VIR.

I shall scale the summit of human nature, and set its Dignity in the strongest light; that the contrast may strike our Centaurs with a just sense of their own ghastly condition; and

X

more

290 *The Dignity of MAN.*

more clearly demonstrate the depth of their fall. Many are for degrading their nature, that they may lessen its duties ; and for looking on themselves as beings insignificant, that they may be profligate beings with a better grace ; and (as they would flatter themselves) with more excuse. They run voluntarily into this error, as men run into the dark, that they may sin without a blush ; framing a lie (which is the common case) for their apology. Their master *Epicurus* meant much the same, by setting the gods at such a distance ; and for their repose, exempting them from the trouble of inspecting the trifles of men. A due sense of the grandeur of man's nature, and destination, is his best bulwark against the frequent and violent assaults temptation makes on him. This is a subject which I wish

The DIGNITY of MAN. 291

wish had been taken into better hands;
For, as it demands all the powers of
the noblest pen to reach its heights;
so the world stands in need of having
this, above all other, pressed home
on their hearts; for all other of any
great moment are imply'd in it.
There are but few whose opinions do
not too much widen the distance be-
tween an Angel, and a Man. I
shall bring them nearer together, as
the best means for the reformation of
*Centaur*s (as you shall see), and for
the most noble exaltation of *Men*.

I have just now observed, that—
“ Angels want nothing but thy own
“ concurrence to crown their wishes
“ for thy welfare.”—This is true:
Shall I not then be pardon'd, if I pre-
sume to put the same meaning into
somewhat an higher stile, and say

292 *The DIGNITY of MAN.*

(with all reverence) that Heaven's desires are at thy mercy?---If so, think, and think again, What art thou? Thou poor, feeble, earth-born, mortal! What art Thou?---Darts not on thee a stream of heavenly Light? Dost thou not see an amazing majesty in man? Have I not, then, made my bold promise good? Did I not, above, tell thee, I would surprize thee with thyself?

Nor can I rest here, A man is almost more than man can conceive; a marvellous being that rises above himself; darting rays of glory beyond the reach of his own sight. My heart is tied to this endearing, transporting, and triumphant, theme.

Is thy consent necessary, to finish what is begun, or rather, only design'd,

sign'd, above ! How strangely this sounds ! Yet must I proceed in a still higher strain.---In thee it is, (how seemingly bold, and impious so to speak ?) Yes, it is in thee, to grant, or deny, the request of the Almighty. ---And impious, indeed, it would be, if unauthorized by Scripture, in which that request is made.

A requesting Omnipotence ! --- What can stun, and confound thy reason more ? What more can ravish, and exalt thy heart ? It can't but ravish and exalt ; it can't but gloriously disturb, and perplex thee, to take in all *that* thought suggests. Thou child of the dust ! thou speck of misery and sin ! How abject thy weakness ? How great is thy power ? Thou crawler on earth, and, possible, (I was about to say) controuler of the skies !

294 *The DIGNITY of M A N.*

‘ Weigh, and weigh well, the wondrous *Truths* I have in view: Which cannot be weigh’d too much; Which, the more they are weigh’d, amaze the more: Which to have supposed, before they were reveal’d, would have been as great madness; and to have presum’d on, as great sin, as it is now madness and sin, *not* to believe. Such-precious, and beatifying news is brought us by revelation; that revelation which is rejected, and despised, by those that affect to be thought wiser, and happier, than the rest of mankind.

The *Truths*, I mean, are imply’d in what follows; *viz.* Heaven intends, desires, labours, works miracles, or more (if more can be), for thy welfare: It presses thee, it importunately presses thee, to comply.

Con-

Consider; how art thou courted?
And, by Whom? By Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit; thy *Fellow-labourers*
for thy good. How is thy alliance
sought? and at what a price? Angels,
inspecting, admiring Angels, cannot
compute its value. An extreme of
love, an extreme of glory, this, which
those Angels (if Angels could envy)
might envy to man: For was it not
deny'd to them?

Thou younger, but darling son of
Heaven! Wonder; Tremble; Tri-
umph!-- Yes, Triumph; Tremble;
Wonder! Thy greatest emotion falls
short of the mighty cause. Thou
greatly belov'd, greatly favour'd,
greatly destin'd, and, oh! greatly
Endanger'd! take heed to thy steps.
Nor less take fire at thy Prize.

296 THE DIGNITY of MAN.

Art thou more exalted, or terrified, at what I say? Exultation, and fear, both rise in extremes.---With both passions comply; highly reverence thy *own* nature; more profoundly adore the *Divine*. Adore it with voice, heart, and life: And thus, to glad all Heaven, assert, rescue, ennoble, and with bliss eternal crown thyself; For without thee, in the constituted order of things, Heaven is unable to do it. Its Almighty hand is, as it were, tied up by its own decree. Without thee, thou amazing being! (pardon'd be the word so bold) there is impotence in Heaven. Nor is it bold when explain'd; for impotence when voluntary, is no impeachment of power.

Is all this *Rapturous*?---Yes, such a rapture, as nothing but gross ignorance,

norance, or more fatal infidelity, can forbear. Is not Rapture due for Felicities inexpressible? And what Felicity is so much as second to this? It is the close, frequent, and feeling inspection of these *interiora* of man's sublime condition, as *Immortal*, and *Redeemed*, that is the highest cordial of human joy; and the richest mine of human thought. A mine deep-dug by few! And yet without it, man is not more a stranger to the natives of *Saturn*, than to himself. Without it, he must want the true, genuine, vital, spirit of a Christian. None without it can be filled with the Light and Comfort of the Holy Ghost. This, O ye Methodists! gives the real New Birth: This enters man in quite another world. In his former world all things are absolutely chang'd:

298 *The DIGNITY of MAN.*

chang'd: Well nigh annihilated as
to his wonted passion for them.

*The Heavens declare the glory of the
Lord, and the Firmament sheweth his
Handy-work.* But the Christian *mine*
I have mentioned, infinitely more
demands our adoration and praise:
Infinitely more demands our exulta-
tion and joy. Are we transported,
and justly transported, at the won-
derful operations of nature, and de-
cline we the contemplation of greater
wonders in ourselves? And when the
former but amuses an hour, the last
blesses an Eternity? In those stupen-
dous views, it is, that the mercy of
God, and glory of man, at highest
shine. Hence it is, that constant
joy is enjoin'd to Christians as an
absolute duty: A duty on weaker
motives,

motives, as absolutely, impracticable.

You see, Sir, that to dive deep into man, is to dive into an ocean of Love Divine; which first drowns us in amazement, then lifts us into triumph; and, at length, lands us (if we are wise) on eternal life. But too many swim only on the surface of our nature; like a feather, thro' their levity, incapable of sinking to those solid, and shining advantages, those pearls of great price; those great, awakening, and strongly stimulating motives to virtue, that lie below. But I shall resume this subject before I close. What is already said is enough to produce that good effect which you will find in the marvellous Scene which, very soon, will open on you.

The

The CENTAURS RESTORATION *to*
HUMANITY.

AT present, my Friend ! we must quit this consecrated, for enchanted, ground ; as you will soon, to your surprize and disgust, perceive. I know it is not to your taste ; nor, indeed, to my own. But you will pardon what the nature of my design, and the truth of history, exact from me, tho' it will give to my page a very different colour. But *levity* has its use, when perverse patients will refuse what is salutary, if convey'd in any vehicle less agreeable to their vitiated taste ; and the grave reader, who nauseates it, sacrifices (thro' too great delicacy) to mere appearances the substance of what is right.

Thou

Thou knowest that our Centaurs can scarce be persuaded that they are not still human creatures ; tho' *mæchantur, scortantur, adulterantur, diabolantur* (I am forc'd to make words that are bad enough for them) ; and not so much as retain,

— *Veteris vestigia formæ.* Ov.

Are they not (to speak with reverence in the language of the prophet) as *fed horses in the morning* ? Do they not *assemble by troops in ladies houses* ? It is *Harlots* in the original ; and so by us translated. But that is not their only objection to the Scriptures. Perhaps, an old *Arabian* proverb may have greater authority with them. What says it ? “ Let him that
“ would be safe, avoid seven things ;
“ Wasps, Spiders, Hyenas, Croco-
“ diles, Effs, Adders, and *Fine*
“ Women.” Here,

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Here, then, I shall begin my Exorcism. Its words must be strange and barbarous, suited to the occasion: Let not your ear, my Friend, be shocked; but listen, and wait the event.

“ MAY *Lais, Thais, Limæ, Lu-*
 “ *pa, Succuba, Quadrantaria, Obo-*
 “ *laria, Euriole, Sthenio, Medusa,*
 “ *Erinmys, Megæra, and Tysiphone*
 “ --- *May* all these, and all *fiæb* la-
 “ dies, whether sick or sound, high
 “ or low, of blood and title, or ditch
 “ and dunghill; natives, foreign,
 “ or infernal--- *May* this glorious
 “ groupe of *Torrifmæd*’s Angels,
 “ these Gorgons, Furies, Harpies,
 “ Leaches, Syrens, Centaur-making
 “ Syrens! paid or unpaid, keeping
 “ or kept, on fire or quenched;
 “ geneva’d or citron’d, in closet or
 “ cellar, in tavern, bagnio, brothel,
 “ roundhouse,

“roundhouse, bridewell, or new-
 “gate—Oh! *may* they cease from
 “this hour, to sing or dance, smile
 “or frown, please or plague, pray
 “or swear, our British, unbritish,
 “youth, manhood, and age; out
 “of their senses, health, estates, re-
 “putation, human nature, and hopes
 “of Heaven!

“And, these enchantresses laying
 “aside their spells, *may* the bewitch-
 “ed of *Great Britain* recover their
 “pristine form, as *Circe’s* herd, at
 “the prayer of *Ulysses*. At the
 “touch of my disenchanting pen,
 “*may* they leap out of their hides
 “for joy; and laying hold on their
 “long deserted definition of man,
 “*Reason and two legs*; walk up-
 “rightly for the future.”

Rejoice

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Rejoice with me, my Friend ! For
do I dream ? or didst thou not observe ?
Didst thou not hear ?—*Intonuit læ-*
vum. As the dark cloud which caus'd it,
is vanish'd, and a flood of light rushes
in ; so it shall fare with *Them*. I see
their dawning reason ; I see the break
of their moral day. And what I see,
I shall relate ; and what I relate,
tho' strange, let no man disbelieve.

The Centaurs that can read, on
perusal of the *Dignity of Man*, are
stung, as the *Trojan* horse, when
Laocoon's spear pierc'd his side ; and
groan as deeply as that, when

Insonuere cavæ, gemitumq; dedere
cavernæ. VIR.

Most of them are much affected,
but differently ; being, at last, fully
convinced that they are *not* men. One
burns

burns his *Bolingbroke*; another, an indecent song: This calls in his bills, pleading privilege no more: That bespeaks a pew against the next quarter: A third blames his delay; swears he will pray directly; falls on his knees, like *Cæsar's* horse,---rises again with a sigh, and solemn vow, that he will be master of his *Pater noster* before to-morrow: A fourth subscribes all his gains by false dice to the Foundling Hospital: A fifth orders two little boys to school immediately; and sends ten guineas to their mothers in Bridewell: A sixth, in a flame of pious zeal, damns a senseless world; and undertakes, in less than a week, to demonstrate that adultery is a crime: A seventh, &c.

But I must not triumph too much,
I have not had equal success with the
Y female

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female Centaurs. From a natural constancy of temper, and habitual aversion to change, they come but slowly into my wishes. But to make amends, when they come, they come with a vengeance, and overshoot the mark. Mr. *W*——ly tells them, that they stand not upright, unless they lean a little backward; like a crossier, or like themselves when they coyly refuse a salute: Thus, tho' converted, they find not the strait-line, but stand still a little bent--to the wrong.

Besides, of my male converts, I have somewhat to complain: For some, tho' chang'd at heart, yet aw'd by fashion, and vain of being still *fine men*, are ashamed to own it; and appear to be fools to save their credit. These hypocrites in vice, these moral fops; ridiculously good, may

may be call'd *little men* in Centaurs' skins: Or coward virtue in masquerade.

And worst of all, of some Centaurs I am quite in despair. They fly my pen, and will not be *touch'd* for their distemper. But, being deep stung by worse than the *Tarantula*, run mad for music, and dance themselves to death. Others, with *Swift* (in that respect a Centaur himself) look on the noble quadrupede as superior to the man. Others, on the contrary, approve, and heartily wish a *Restoration* to Humanity: but are careless, and indolent. They would, indeed, if a *Dæmon* was not in possession, they *would* be good. But will not be at the trouble of bringing a writ of *ejectment*, tho' *Sophronias* proffers to draw it up for them. The

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lowest price of virtue is vigilance, and industry; and if it cost us no more, it comes very cheap.

As for those that are truly conscious of their calamity, and heartily desirous of an escape, mark the good effect of the least tendency to goodness; the mighty change, a Restoration of the human figure is, actually, begun. But the process is gradual; nature advances, never leaps, They became not Centaurs all at once.

Nemo repenta fuit turpissimus. Juv.

As evil habits, which occasion'd their Transformation, were gradually contracted, it is no wonder, that their Recovery, which is occasion'd by good events, should prove equally gradual,

gradual, and slow. One sheds a mane, another drops a tail; and appears only as too closely dock'd: Some feel their hides loosen; some blister as in haste for separation: Some wonder to see slender fingers sprouting thro' hoofs by their penitential tears, mollify'd into flesh: Some, like dancing dogs, continue upright some time; but, tir'd of that unnatural restraint, drop into Centaurs for life. So dangerous in moral distempers, as well as natural, is a relapse: Some, quite restor'd, yet still retain so much of their former nature, that they are apt to trip, if a strong temptation, like a stone, or cart-rut, lies across their way: Some can scarce believe their good fortune, and fear it is a dream. Others, too sanguine, cry out, Brother! to the first man they see; who starts at his new relation,

Y 3

relation, with a hide still sticking at his heels.

What a loud call do I hear among them for things strange, and new? For dresses suited to the human shape; for pleasures suited to the human mind; for Bibles, Prayer-books, Debt-books; for virtuous Consorts, faithful Friends, and fit Objects of Charity; for rational Improvement and Employments: No longer for Newmarket trappings; but for human ornaments. This, however, where the Restoration is complete. Poor *Sudbury* is still awkwardly hopping on three legs; while others stand firmly planted on half four: And one, more learned than the rest, cries out;

Πλέον ἡμῶν παντός.

HES,

The

The rest naturally take it for a pious thanksgiving, and give a loud Amen.

The vision, my Friend! (if 'tis a vision) continues. Please to observe here the fatal effect of bad habits, and what difficulties they lay us under in our recovery of the right, when long laid aside, and the great blessings of it are forgot. The human figure, being now intirely recovered; transported at their transmigration into new quarters, like surpriz'd strangers, they rather stand amaz'd at the novelty, than quite enjoy it. My full grown, and some aged, infants, toss about their legs and arms, like a *Pantin*, in quest, as yet, of their right and graceful movement. They wreath their pliant body to and fro, before they find its strait line; and fear, lest it should

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fall, being dangerously set up on one end. They resemble persons working a new-invented engine, awkward, and much at a loss, till they are masters of its make ; so hard is it to recover the right once wilfully lost. But these extempore men, these new grafts on humanity, as soon as by frequent efforts they have learn'd their lesson, and are let into the secret of this foreign machinery ; after due devotion for the change ; and looking back with horror on their former state ; they enter immediately on human measures, and give full evidence that their reason and reputation, only div'd for a season ; and that they now rise up into *real* men.

Array'd in decent, plain apparel, not dappled as the morning, with

em-

embroidery, or with lace all over
 litted like the beautiful *Indian* as,
 they call a council; and, their first
manly resolution is to proclaim peace
 with the *Lapithæ*, or Men of Virtue;
 with whom, from time immemorial,
 the Centaurs have been at war. *Chi-
 ron* bent his bow against them: But
 of war various has been the fortune
 between them; till within this last
 half century, the Centaurs increas-
 ing both in numbers and boldness,
 wearing frontlets of brass on their
 foreheads, and *Horace's* *Æs triplex*
 on their breasts; and having of late
 a mighty giant at their head, whose
 quills, more fatal than the porcu-
 pine's, threaten'd a thousand deaths
 at once, they began to dream of no-
 thing less than victory complete. But
 the present reinforcement of their
 enemies will turn the scale against
 them.

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them. I say reinforcement; for the next step my converts take is to lift into the *Lapithean* service, determin'd to meet their late friends in no friendly sort, under a banner with this motto,

*Quid verum, atque decens, curo & rogo,
& omnis in hoc sum.*

Which promises victory; for they are very formidable foes, who have had the fortitude first to conquer themselves.

At the news of their revolt offend-
ed *Torrismond*, burning for revenge,
cries, Ha, Ha, snuffs the battle from
afar,

*Collectumq; premens volvit sub naribus
ignem.*

VIR.
The

The glory of his nostrils is terrible.
And still more abundantly his heroic
choler rises on hearing that their first
destin'd enterprize is against *Boling-
broke*-castle ; That delight of his
eyes, and defiance of his foes : For
he deems it impregnable ; because
it is moated round with *Acheron*,
and its aspiring, proud battlements
threaten Heaven. He holds sacred
the very name of the noble founder,
because he was graciously pleas'd to
knock off *their* most insupportable
chains of common sense ; and rescue
them from the restraints, and re-
proach, of humanity.

This castle was built out of the va-
rious ruins of many demolish'd forts
of infidelity, pompously put together,
fac'd over with a material more shine-
ing than solid ; and cemented with
un-

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untemper'd mortar. *Sophronius* * heads the laudable enterprize. The castle is taken as was antient *Babylon*. He first turns the general stream of the nation, by the force of strong and solid eloquence, into a new chanel, as *Cyrus* did the river *Euphrates*; then entering the castle, and finding the garison turning things sacred to prophane use, and drown'd in debauch; obtains a sudden and complete victory; but is a most merciful conqueror: For, instead of putting any to death, he only puts the most sensible of them out of countenance: And to their own darling delights, and boasted glories, instead of the gallies, condemns them for life. Obliging them, however, in acknow-

* An excellent writer in this controversy, now in the press.

legement

legement of his clemency to wear yellow cockades impress'd with these words "*Be thou a Centaur still!*" The bad man's choice includes his punishment.

The same *Sophronius*, adorned with his well deserved mural crown, rescues the character of a late pious, and learned prelate, which the Centaurs boasted *Achilles*, (who,

Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non arrogat.) HOR.

had dragg'd, like *Hector's* body, round the town in the dirt: For the glory of *Britain*, and for the light, and emulation of posterity, I see it inscrib'd on a column of adamant; with a *Bolingbroke crouchant* emboss'd on the base; who now contributes
to

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to support (as much as such a feeble *Atlas* can) that celestial character, which he lately labour'd to destroy; proud of his uncircumcised *reason*; which reason, notwithstanding, had evidently lost its *authority* with himself: For when *that* is preserved, sense submits to reason; and when sense submits to reason, reason submits to the reveal'd word of God. And (since some are in love with words) I must observe, that reason stoop'd to revelation, is reason still; only reason more reasonable; and its great hazard of error is all that it has lost.

And now, my Friend! what shall I say on this happy revolution? Shall I not out-boast *Augustus*? He said of *Rome*, *Latericeam inveni, Marmoream reliqui.* I, of *London*, *Inveni Equinam,*

Equinam, reliqui Humanam. 'Twas
 wife in *Britain* to reform her year,
 much more to reform her manners;
 Early in her new *Style*, a new *Æra*,
 is begun;

Redeunt Saturnia regna. VIR.

And an island, once more keeps the
 continent in awe. Far tho' lately, in
 the throng'd streets of our metropo-
 lis, I could rarely meet a man, now,
 (how strangely do thought and
 imagination spring forward!) men
 abound; and Centaurs, who sunk
 our glory, intirely cease.

For those *Incurables* among them;
 who read the *Dignity of Man* un-
 struck; and persisting in *Swift's* sen-
 timents, refuse offer'd humanity,
 escape not vengeance for their folly.

The

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The sky darkens, thunder rolls, the ground trembles under them; and a sulphureous smoke arising, as from a Vulcano, involves them all in its horrors. Ravens croak, owls scream, bats fly at noon, women shriek, old ones pray, young ones nest in the heroic bosom of the next man they meet, purely for shelter; and five hundred fifty pregnant syrens miscarry, at the dreadful scene. And yet but a prelude this maternal disaster to the paternal calamity that follows. For, lo! the cloud-involv'd Centaurs, to their own great astonishment, no longer neigh, but bellow, like bulls; their foreheads bud with horns; and the white, grey, dappled, sorrel, bay, roan, strawberry, &c. are all blotted into the deepest black; as if, like *Achilles*, they had been dipp'd in *Styx*.

And

And (what is very remarkable), like him too, they are wounded in the heel. They are, instantaneously, all founder'd; they fall; they groan like the syrens in travail; and well they may; for now the final blow is struck; their solid, semicircular hoofs, with a loud explosion, like a fir'd bomb, burst, all at once, asunder; and, in their chosen, dirty, path of life, they deep-print their true character, with large, jetty, *cloven* feet for the future. Abash'd at their infamous change, and seeking where to hide a formidable phantom appearing with a coronet dropping from his head, and a huge volume in his hand, by the magic of the *First Philosophy* a sudden *Pandemonium* rises, like a pestilential exhalation, for the welcome, and well-adapted, reception of them all. Now exiles from

Z

the

the commerce, and converse, and habitations of man; they are no longer domestic animals, no longer carry fair ladies abroad, or are pamper'd by them for future exercise, at home; even *Newgate* bars her condemn'd-hole against them.

Nothing remains, but to cleanse the now-deserted *Stables*, and to render them fit for human use; and to persuade the She-grooms, who kept them, into some more decent, and less diabolical, course of life; especially my Patroness; who for the honour (as she calls it) of my Dedication, has promis'd to give into my superstition; and to play fair on Sundays, and learn her Catechism, when the *Masquerades*, for the season, are over: Which, out of an unsurmountable regard for their first, and most amo-

rous,

rous, and most musical, son, *Chiron*,
 she confesses ingenuously, she can-
 not forbear. For Ladies love a Cen-
 taur still.

The CONCLUSION!

IT is high time, my Friend! to
 quit this fairy-land, of which, I
 know, you are heartily tir'd; and to
 perform my promise in resuming the
Dignity of Man; a theme which
 my heart affects; and which your
 conduct, in some measure, inspires.
 And who can think of it, unimprov'd?
 He who thinks of his dignity, neces-
 sarily thinks of his God: And he
 who values his dignity, as necessarily,
 worships, and obeys Him. In a
 sense therefore, of human dignity,
 our endanger'd virtue finds her most
 powerful guard.

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Think you that I have carried the Dignity of Man too high? Spare the sacred page. "There, one of *Adam's* " feed converses face to face with his " Creator. Another is call'd his Friend. " He who made the worlds delights " to be call'd the son of a third. He " who made the worlds even died for " the meanest of men. The meanest " of men has it within his power to " be an heir of the most mighty God, " and a joint-heir with the most blest " ed Jesus." Absolves not this the boldest stroke of my pen? What can raise our self-estimation so high, what can aggrandize human nature so much, as this?

In Heaven's great, and constant effort for our welfare, is capably written the Dignity of Man. That is a key to the moral world, and opens,

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opens, and explains the reason of all God's, otherwise mysterious, conduct in it. Every step of which is evidently calculated for man's present, or future, felicity ; or both. The long shining series, the golden chain of all God's marvellous acts, from the beginning to the close of time, speaks his uninterrupted regard for human nature ; and what can more loudly proclaim human dignity than this? O let it not be said, that man's dignity is declared by all things, but the manners of man!

As distant as they may be thought by the thoughtless, Heaven and Earth are so near together, so shot (as it were) into one another, that good men are truly *foreigners on earth ; have their conversation in Heaven ; are fellow-citizens with the*

Z 3

Saints,

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Saints, and of the household of God.
To speak allusively to the patriarchal vision, good men are Angels; only, as yet; at the bottom of the ladder; and some Angels are only men made perfect, at the top of it. As a man from an embryo, so differs an Angel from a man; what one is, the other soon shall be. Since this is the case (and a most glorious case it is), and since by such multitudes it is either not consider'd, or not known;

O fortunati nimium, bona si sua norunt!
VIRG.

would be no needless memorandum, or improper motto, for all mankind.

But you still have your objection on the whole--- "Will not raising
"so

“ so high, and dwelling so long on
 “ the Dignity of Man, occasion
 “ pride?” No ; on the reverse, a due
 sense of it will necessitate humility.
 Pride springs from a wish, or conceit,
 which an individual has of his
 superiority over some others of the
 same species. The dignity I speak
 of is equally the dignity of all men ;
 and what levels, can’t exalt. It will
~~necessitate~~ *necessitate* humility ; because without
~~that~~ *that*, it can’t preserve itself ; our
 native dignity will die in the result.
 As for that dignity which occasions
 your objection, we have, I confess,
 too much of it. We have in abundance
 what may be call’d *Lunar*
 great men. Men in themselves
 opaque, who borrow beams, from
 their circumstances, or situation ;
 which beams they shew, like the
 moon, by night : I mean, when ig-

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ignorance prevails; then the darkened understandings of their admirers give them leave to shine.

These Lunar grandees have generally many little surrounding Satellites, that help, by their adulations, to gild their opacity. But of such great men, who are forced to *assume* (as men must plunder, who would be gainers where nothing is due), it must be said, that the greatest of them would be greater still, if they would only please to be a little less.

They only have *Solar*, or self-born, light, who live up to the dignity of their nature. Their light is not only their own, and illustrious; but inextinguishable, and eternal. These, as they are the greatest, are also

also the most humble, of mankind. For they well know, that our grandeur is to be look'd for in the Love of God, not in the merit of man. And therefore they set it down as a maxim, (and a maxim most true, and useful it is), "no man ever
"thought too highly of his Nature,
"or too meanly of Himself."

Here would I cease. But how hard to get loose from this ever-teeming, all-important, and inexhaustible, theme? It fills with serene joy the superior region of the soul; and denies entrance to the clouds and storms of worldly perturbation, and care. Such the height of its joy, that music, and wine, leave the rais'd hearts of our sons of delight far, far, below. And yet how is this glorious subject in most
minds,

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minds, by the love of the world, close-compress'd, and folded up, as an oak in an acorn, or a man in the womb? To develope, and expand it, how great my desire? In which of its thousand shining lights shall I set it, for our final contemplation of its mighty moment to man?

Man is the most noble study of man. Let him circle the globe, let him traverse the skies; and then, for something more worthy his notice, and admiration, return to himself. To himself he is a Theatre immense: And was reputed such, when that theatre had much less to exhibit, than, at present, it can boast; and when it was but faintly illuminated with the glimmering beams of far more feeble lights. The so renowned *Know thyself*, was nothing but a pre-

cept enjoining a close inspection and survey of this Theatre; yet that Precept, as to its Author, was held divine; and as to its practice, the supreme wisdom of man. That Precept is now exalted into an awful Command from Heaven; and that Theatre is consecrated into a venerable Temple; a temple of the Holy Spirit.

As in some pieces of Perspective, by the pressure of the eye, so in this Temple, by the pressure, or perseverance of thought, the magnificent prospect is opened, and aggrandiz'd, still more and more; and opening discovers the full Dignity of Man. In what does that consist? In the marvellous things the Almighty has done, and design'd, for him. And if so, this survey gives at once
the

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the greatest *Virtue*, and the greatest *Blessing*, of life. For who can see those marvellous things without an ardent *Love of God*, which is the supreme *Virtue* of man? And who can reflect on such indulgence past, without an *absolute Trust* in such a Friend for the future; which of man is the supreme *Blessing*?

But this *Blessing*, and this *Virtue*, this *Glory*, and *Comfort* of life, is lost to those to whom this *Temple* is shut. And it is shut to the careless and ignorant; to the slothful, and unawakened, in the most illustrious theory of the *Christian Religion*. If therefore such men, in what has been advanced, shall find any thing like a *Key* to this yet unopen'd *Temple*; and shall enter its sacred, and surprising recesses, and read the wonders

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wonders of Divine Love in it; that is, in Themselves, in their own condition, and prospects; if they shall see, and contemplate, the three Persons of the Godhead, before Creation, assuming, and through Time's whole length, exercising, their separate parts, and provinces, of Philanthropy; and shall behold an innumerable flight of Angels for ever on the wing to receive their commands, and speed, away, on various dispatches, for the temporal, and eternal, welfare of man--- How should I rejoice? For such a key would be next in value to the key of Heaven. It opens the porch, the preliminary scene to it. Therefore have I kept it on the anvil so long; and yet how unfinish'd at last? May some master-hand accomplish, and multitudes open the yet absolutely unknown

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known scene of their own Nature,
and blessed Destination, with it.

And now, my Friend, tell me,
how must his love of glory fail;
How must his *Ambition* creep, who,
after the strong inspiration of such a
view as this, miserably confines it
beneath the sun? Consider this view,
and see how high human nature may
soar; then look down on the Cen-
taur, and see (if thou canst bear the
sight) how low the sons of Heaven
may fall? Shall a Being whose in-
terests spread so wide as to take in
both ends of the Creation; shall a
Being deeply concerned in what
was done in the days of *Adam*, and
more deeply still, in what shall be
done in the great day of Consum-
mation; shall such an expansive, and
far-interested, Being, with the most
fornid,

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fordid, and despicable, self-denial, and the most inconceivably criminal *Poverty of Spirit*, imprison his stifled thought, and nail down his little heart to the narrow span of this present life? God forbid. If there is the least sense of dignity, or fear of shame; the least spark of man, alive, let us consider that we are not only the favourites, but the sons too, of Heaven; and obey in this our voyage of human life, as *Æneas* in his from Troy, the *Delian Oracle*,

Antiquam exquirite matrem. VIRG.

But our over-whelming shame, and almost incurable misery, is, that we are so *carnaliz'd* by our lusts, that our heavenly * Mother, in our esteem, has no Blessing for us; that a *spiritual* Paradise, is no Paradise; that it is a Paradise we wish lost; one
from

* Gal. iv. 26.

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from which we desire to fall ; and to wallow, *Epicuri de grege Porci*, in our beloved mire. And yet what is this spot of earth which so swallows us up, and in its gulph of obscenities extinguishes our love of Heaven ? Its enchantment is very short. A few days, a few hours, may make us as wise as *Salomon*. For rest assured, earth's rankest idolater, who now, perhaps, in our flourishing school of Infidelity, thinks a wiser than *Salomon* is here, will, at the close of life, in his aching heart, ask *Solomon's* pardon for not believing him before.

I believe that wise, and experienced Prince, whose wisdom and experience was designed to spare future ages their own fatal experience in folly ; and closing with his last sentiment,

fentiment, the fum of his Divine Philosophy, affirm, that many a Philosopher, may juſtly be reputed a fool; that as there is but one God, one Tryal, one great Tribunal, one Salvation; ſo there is but one Wiſdom; that all, which devoid of *that*, aſſumes the name, is but folly of different colours, and degrees; gay, grave, wealthy, letter'd, domeſtic, political, civil, military, recluſe, oſtentatious, humble, or triumphant; and is ſo called in the language of Angels, in the ſole-authentic, and unalterable ſtyle of *Eternity*.

That awful word inſpires; and awakens ideas that ſlept before; it points to Heaven; and ſhews me where I fail.— Though ſtudious to do it juſtice, I have wrong'd my theme. And wrong'd it much.

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Somewhat more is wanting to consummate, and crown, the Dignity of Man. What have I advanced ? “ That man is *near* to the blessed “ Angels ? ” Is he not more ? --- Yes, most adorable Jesus ! man is more ; much more. O whither dost Thou call me ? Whither dost Thou transport astonish’d human thought ? I scarce dare look up to the summit of such stupendous Love. Leave I not Cherubim and Seraphim below ? Ye first-born of Light ! ye Thrones ! Dominions ! Principalities ! and Powers ! What do I behold ? How aw’d, and how raptur’d ; with what prostration of heart, what elevation of joy, from this remote region, this lowest vale of the creation, this land of darkness, and shadow of death, look I up thro’ incumbent clouds of misery and sin, and behold--- a *Man* in

in Heaven! In the highest Heaven! In union with the Most High! In union with *your* most ador'd, and eternal King! And so thron'd in authority, to *you* so superior in power, as to make ceaseless intercession for the rest of mankind; not for those whose fall left seats empty in Heaven: Oh aid me with *your* language, with words more than human, to praise Him! that Advocate unwearied for his relations (proud language!) for his earth-born Relations, and Friends, below.

Is not this *almost* too much for human modesty to mention? For human frailty to credit? For human corruption to admit?---But is it not also *far* too much for human Gratitude to leave unproclaimed, unfounded, unadored? *I go to my Father, and your Father, to my God,*

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and your God. What heart-subduing, thought-o'erwhelming, man-exalting, words are these? What an amazing, I had almost said *levelling*, condescension of the Deity! What an amazing, I had almost said what a *deifying*, sublimation of man!

O blessed Revelation! that opens such wonders. O dreadful Revelation! if it opens them in vain. And are there those with whom they go for nought? Strange men! in possession of a Blessing, the bare hopes of which supported the spirits of the wife, for four thousand years, under all the calamities of life, and terrors of death; and know they not that it is in their hands? Or knowing, cast it away as of no value? A Blessing, the very shadow of which made the body of the Patriarchal, and

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and Jewish Religion ! A Blessing, after which the whole earth panted, as the Hart for the water-brooks ! A Blessing, on which the heavenly Host were sent to congratulate mankind ; and sing the glad Tidings into their transported hearts ! A Blessing, which was more than an equivalent for Paradise lost ! And is this Blessing declined, rejected, exploded, despised, ridiculed ? Oh unhappy men !— The Frailty of man is almost as incomprehensible as the Mercies of God.

Who then can inculcate too much the Dignity of Man ? For what equally to a due sense of it can inspire a contempt of the world, a fondness for which occasions the madness I deplore ? Indeed a due sense of it, evidently, includes the

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whole

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whole of our duty. It inspires high veneration, and great gratitude, to God, who gave it; it inspires a reverence for Ourselves, which is of utmost moment to our character and peace; and it inspires a proper regard for all Mankind, as equal sharers in it: which regard would prevent infinite mischief, and banish half the miseries of life.

This, its universal use, its nature so pregnant of good effects, determin'd me to the choice of this too much neglected subject. And perhaps, I have now set it in the strongest light. But if not; its importance is such that it should be set in all lights, and from every point that imagination can suggest, and reason authorize, strike, if possible, the degenerate, deeply-sunk, and ever-groveling,

groveling, human heart. He that looks not on man in the light above, or some light similar, and equivalent, knows not himself; is a perfect stranger at home; his heart wanders an exile from his destin'd felicity; he deprives himself of the powerful impulse which he so much wants, and which Nature denies, and which Revelation design'd him, for his more vigorous advance in Virtue here; and his more sublime ascent in Glory hereafter: Which two are the whole of his happiness; all the rest is extrinsic, precarious, transient, and, inevitably, mortal.

And who will dare say, that he who declines, or falls from the noble, and elevating object of Contemplation above-mentioned, and the glorious hopes it inspires, into the bar-

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ren field of amusement, and trifle ;
 or into the bestial abyss of a few
 years debauch, for his portion ; who
 will dare affirm, that such a wretch
 differs not as much in reason, and
 happiness, from the true Christian,
 as a Quadruped differs, in form, from
 a Man ? It is not form, but manners,
 which make humanity. The mould
 in which we are cast, only says what
 we *should be* ; nothing but our con-
 duct tells us what *we are*. What
 wretches are they who contradict their
 figure ; and accuse nature of having
 set a wrong stamp on their lying
 clay ? The most despicable, and de-
 plorable Being under Heaven is a Pa-
 gan in a Christian land. He is like
 a rank growth of poison in Para-
 dise. He confines that thought
 which should set out at the creation,
 and travel down with wonder and
 adora-

adoration, at every step, thro' the countless Mercies and Miracles of God for man, into nature's final dissolution; and thence launch for a never-ending voyage in Eternity,—to the nothing of threescore years; and the wretched means of annihilating that nothing, of contracting that span. Lust exhausts, Luxury overwhelms, and, by heaping on Fuel, quite puts out the Fire.

Where is that Dignity which Reason exacts, and which Revelation exalts, in Man? In what I have said on that Subject, I have, I think done more to our purpose, than he who measures the Heavens, and numbers the Stars. I have taken (as I conceive) the true measure of Man. That extensive measure rising above the skies, which the Centaur dwarfs

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dwells down to the scanty span of the brute creation, to the *bestia triumphanti*; and making (might I so speak) a dunghill of our condition, with the cock in the fable, for a grain of sensuality, spurns the jewel away; the powers angelic, the radiant beams of the Divinity, in the *real* Man.

But while I contemplate his grandeur (so mixt our Nature, so great, and little, is Man), I feel his weakness: In mind, and body, I feel his Infirmities.---Pain, this instant, stops my Pen.---Stops it short of what I had proposed to say.---It bids me take, while I may, my leave of him I love.---I take a solemn, because, perhaps, a final, Leave. It is, at least, possible, we may meet no more. No more in this foreign land;
in

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in this gloomy apartment of the boundless Universe of God.

O thou! the last, and strongest hold that earth has on me! my Friend in Jesus Christ! my Rival in immortal Hope! and my Companion (I trust) for Eternity! come to my bosom: Though so far remote, I take thee to my heart. Souls suffer no separation from obstruction of matter, or distance of place; Oceans may roll between us, and climates interpose, in vain. The whole material Creation is no bar to the winged mind. Farewell.—Through boundless ages, fare thou well. The Dignity of Man, and Blessing of Heaven, be with thee! The broad hand of the Almighty cover thee! Mayst thou shine, when the Sun is quench'd!
mayst

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mayst thou live, and triumph, when
Time expires!

This cordial Duty done, this human debt discharged, my mind is eased, my spirits revive; my pain is less. And when this endless letter is ended, I shall drop thee for *the present*; and this idle pen, and an idler world (that other feather in the scale of Eternity) *for ever*. He that drops the world, before that drops him, He *only* knows its real value; and the value of his own Soul. And whatever the gaiety of the world pretends to, he *only* can have a solid, permanent, and uninterrupted joy of heart, who builds it on the Rock; on hope of the Divine Mercy. Give a man the world, and give him no more; and his happiness is at an end: The human heart

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heart will necessarily feel a Futurity, thro' all the superabundance earth can heap on it: Nothing can possibly give it a peace independent of an Hereafter: That point of view in his Creation, that purchase of blood in his Redemption, and yet in human conduct, that ever neglected *All* of man.

Ask the last bill of mortality; ask Pleasure's or Ambition's triumph most triumphant, what is human life? Knowledge of the world recommends recess; knowledge of life reconciles to the grave. Few sufficiently consider how great mercy is imply'd in the grant of death. With a heart quite disengaged, its cable cut, imploring a smooth passage, and gentle gale, bound for that port whence none returns, I wait the mighty
MASTER'S

MASTER'S Call. That Call irresistible, which every moment should expect; which every fool forgets; every knave dreads; every wise man welcomes; and every monarch obeys.

And yet, my friend, some of our few Coævals close not altogether with this way of thinking; but rather seem to judge, that some little degree of precipitation may be laid to its charge. As the dial knows not the hour it points out; so they, by their infirmities and decays, discover their time of day to all, but themselves. Their Desires grow stronger as Enjoyments grow more coy. It is somewhat to be fear'd, that their Hearts gravitate, almost as much as their scarce-animated clay; and take but few, and feeble flights above the level of the world; though very excellent

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cellent things are spoken of thee,
Thou welcome Haven of Eternal
Rest! Thou delightful Region of
inextinguishable Love! Thou great
Goal of Perfection! Thou bright
Meridian of Glory! Thou boundless
Ocean of *unrepenting Pleasure*! Thou
City of God!

And is man invited to this fullness
of fruition? and is man importun'd
to partake the glories of the Almighty?
---He that weighs not well this
transcendent height of Love Divine,
is far from being able to comprehend
the terrible depth of human guilt.
And (to close with that, with which
these Letters begun) what guilt so
deep as that of a *baptiz'd* Infidel?
That obscene Bird of Night, flying
abroad by Day, with eyes unable to
bear the sun, the whoot, offence, and

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ill omen, of all the *rational* world!
A rank heathen rising out of the sacred font, is *reason's* greatest shock, the deepest wound of rectitude, the blackest brand of earth, the sigh of Angels, a Second Spear in the Side of the most Blessed Jesus, and the supreme triumph of the foe to God, and Man.

Most gracious God! in happiness and dignity, how widely distant is man from man? In both, what an immense superiority has the pious Believer? Scarce seems of the same species the believing, and apostate, world. To the first, how justly may we cry out, O ye happy Sons of the fallen *Adam*! where is the damage you received from your father's fall? Where are the once lamenting miseries of life; where are the once unfur-

unfurmoutable terrors of death, fled?
I discern the Dignity of Man, when
his carcase is in the dust. I congrat-
ulate his happiness while the worm
is feasting on him. Rejoice, O ye
dead! exult and sing, ye dark in-
habitants of the grave! For do I not
behold, even in the grave, the com-
fort of Heaven; when, with an eye
of Christian Faith, in Heaven I be-
hold a *Man*? The Man Christ Jesus?
And with transport, and adoration
let me resound the lofty language of
the Prophet, — *A man the Fellow of
the Almighty* *.

How deplorably wretched is the
man unblest'd with such a sight?
How criminally wretched, if he vo-
luntarily declines it! If he volunta-
rily recalls the suspended curse; ob-
stinately presents disarm'd death with

* Zachar. c. xiii. 7.

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his mortal sting again; and pours out, in his distraction, all the vials of its original bitterness on the days, how dismal and unredeemed, of an apostate human life? What a formidable *Revelation* does such a Man bespeak in lieu of that which brought pardon and peace? What a Revelation of no glad tidings awaits him, when his now-involving cloud breaks, and Truth thunders on the dreadfully illumin'd soul, at the no-distant hour of death?

It is, indeed, in man's option, which of these *Revelations* he will admit (one he must); but it is not in man's wisdom to make the least apology for a wrong option in so plain and important a point. A point how plain? I shall here just touch on a single Proof of the truth of
of

of Christianity, which renders any further proof, among proofs innumerable; unnecessary with me, to create and support our Christian Faith.

Every thing in the *natural* world is a proof of a God ; and almost every thing in the *moral* world is a proof of a Revelation. As, in the material universe all exactly corresponds with the previous ideas of it in the Divine Mind ; and in a substantial copy renders legible to man its invisible pattern, in the thought of the Almighty ; so a complete history of mankind (if such could be had) would be little more than the same Almighty's prophetic word in Scripture, materialized into Fact. The prophets are more accurate and authentic historians of the *future*, than the most happy genius, uninspired, can possibly

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be of the *past*. And want we *miracles* for our conviction? The series of Scripture-prophecies accomplish'd, is the most striking of miracles: It is a miracle not expiring in a transient act; but of great longævity, persisting in a perpetually-increasing weight and validity, through the protracted course of many thousand years. It is a living, growing, permanent, paramount, miracle, lighted up as a lamp of illumination for all ages; that all able to see, might be quite unable to disbelieve; quite unable to retain reason, and, at the same time, renounce belief. For if the Scripture-prophecies are fulfilled, the Scripture is the Word of God; and if the Scripture is the Word of God, Christianity cannot be false. Shall we reject it as false, when, in the present fate of almost all nations, we

we are surrounded, and condemned, by a full ocular demonstration of its being True? Let us dispute our own existence, if we would continue of a piece with this.

Where is our natural curiosity? And that, in points which concern us most? Would we know what we *are*; or what we *may*, or *must* be to all Eternity? Nothing but Revelation can tell us either. So that if we acted in no higher motive than mere Instinct, Revelation would be precious in our sight. But vice extinguishes not our reason only, but our instinct too, when it would do us any good. Either the strong instinct of curiosity is extinguished by it, or there is an astonishing, and pernicious self-denial in Infidels, if their most natural curiosity is still
B b 3 alive.

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alive. Revelation was written for our instruction; and are we too wise to be instructed by God himself? Throw we by unread, and as of no consequence, an unseal'd Letter sent to us from the Almighty?

In our Infidels it is no less than defiance of common sense, no less than harden'd impudence to the rational nature of man, to pretend, that, on due inquiry, they want proof of the truth of the Gospel. Its proof is not only great, but amazing; it is not only sufficient to convince, but astonish: Such its accumulated, overwhelming, evidence, so truly *marvellous its light*, that if rejected, it lays us under a necessity of rejecting Reason, and Revelation, together. And is not *Reason obeyed*, the sole dignity, glory, grandeur, of Gods,
and

and Men? Nothing can so much degrade, as the violation of reason; and no violation of reason is equal to a wrong option in this Point supreme. Too faint is the strongest colouring of all the severe fables of antiquity, to reach an absurdity so absurd.

That of *Circe's* Sty, and *Chiron's* Stud, falls short of the Mark. For reason, in those days, had not such powerful motives to combat, or such glaring lights to resist. And guilt blackens, in proportion to the strength of the lights resisted, and the motives overcome.

Since then (as has been proved) if reason makes a man, by ceasing to be Christians, they cease to be Men; by what term shall we call those, whom no term can defame?

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Let,

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Let, therefore, your offended Sister pardon my Parable ; and let no honest man, for the future, so far offend propriety, and profane our language, as to join in one abus'd word such repugnant ideas, as those of the Centaur and the Man ; one the idea of a Being, horridly rejoicing in the miserable, and mistaken, thought, that this short life, shortened by vice and vanity, is his All ; and, that like the snuff of a candle, it shall go out for ever ; rejoicing to think, that after all his bustle and ambition, he shall only, by his *putrid carcase*, add rankness to a clod of earth, and defile the dirt. The other idea is that of a Being big with humble, but triumphant, hope, of exalting, with his *immortal Spirit*, joy celestial ; of adding melody to seraphic choirs, in ceaseless Hallelujahs to their Eternal King. “ Sing praises, sing praises to
“ our

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“our God; sing praises, sing praises
“to our King. Praise him, all ye
“Angels! Praise him, all his Host.
“Praise him Sun and Moon! Praise
“him all ye Stars, and Light!” For
a fairer Light, a nobler Star, a more
illustrious Sun is risen; the Sun of
Righteousness with healing in his
wings; and all the Glories of un-
bounded Creation are outshone by
the smallest beam of the Gospel; by
the faintest hope of wrath appeased,
and eternal life.

Yet this is that Light, which some,
in their superior wisdom, would ex-
tinguish as superfluous to man, and
set up the dim tapers of their Reason
in its stead:

*O thou worst Guide, Philosopher, and
Friend!*

Say, for thou know’st, what is it to
be wise? *Ess. on Man.*

With

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With equal wisdom, thou mightest imagine the Sun superfluous, and unnecessary to the material world; and call on chaos for primæval darkness, as the great blessing of mankind. Say, for, *now* indeed, thou knowest, is not *Lucifer* in the list of such benefactors as these?

Tho' in *this* his Lordship is quite as good a friend to mankind, as he is a philosopher in his *materiality* of the Soul; yet I will venture advancing towards that precious doctrine, so far, as to call, without scruple, such sort of imagination the *Thoughts of the Body*; for from the body's predominance they, necessarily, rise: And that necessity proves the necessity of Religion, which they resist: So that such men (which, perhaps, they are not aware of), while, as much as they can, they condemn Religion, they com-

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commend it too ; they as loudly call for it, as the disease for the cure. For Religion is nothing, but an expedient for supporting, against the body's assaults and encroachments, the sacred interests of the soul. Thus, then, you have, my Friend ! the whole cause of Infidelity, and the whole reason of exerting all our powers against it, at once, before you. How can our whole danger and duty, be set in a shorter, or fuller, view, than this ?

At your request, Sir, in the widespread ruins of our *faith* and *virtue*, I have taken a slight view of a more melancholy scene, than could be presented by famine, pestilence, or the sword : But, by God's Grace, we shall repent ; and not suffer our greatest glory to become our greatest dread ; not suffer our prime, and unspeakable

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ble blessing, Immortality, to render existence the most insupportable curse. What a terrible inversion is this of the high favours of Heaven ! This must be the case, when man is all *Sense* : For to sense nothing exists but the *present*. Our present is so dear, that the future is undone. Strange conduct ! when our step *out* of life is so short ; and so sure, sudden, and innumerable our accidents *in* it, that almost every moment assures us, that, unless in time we lay hold on our *invisible*, and, to reason alone, existing God, we shall soon fall from all we held so dear ; and that then, not only all our happiness, but all our hope, is at an end.

What is there, O my countrymen !
O my friend ! O my poor, endan-
ger'd, immortal Soul ! what is there,
from

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from *Adam* to this hour, but fully confirms what I say ? The world allures us ; the world condemns us ; he who takes that kind advice, which through his own experience, the world conveys, will despise all its charms. As ignorance teems with Infidelity, so Knowledge is a fast friend of Faith. If we would but know, what we can't but know ; if we would but believe our senses in what passes, and our common records in what has passed ; it would not only reconcile us to, but, almost, supply the place of, our *Creed* ; so very natural a growth is the Christian of the Man.

As natural a growth of an Infidel is a Beast : A beast by God uncreated ; by *Adam* unnam'd. That defect *Adam's* meanest son has supply'd,
by

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by writing CENTAUR in the horrid gap, which the bold infidel has made, by the desperate erasure of his Christian name.

Is this thought too opprobrious, and a term of reproach?—I will make some amends by a short hint of advice, which may save from reproach the whole length of their lives. “Let not the brute any longer
“run away with the man, lest some-
“thing more dreadful should run
“away with the brute.”

If this advice is refused, as *Alexander* said of the *Persian* effeminate army, *there are many enemies, but few soldiers*; so say I, of this *Paphian* isle, *there are a multitude of people, but a small remnant of men*. As the face of the globe was deformed by

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the flood, so nature's original plan of due proportion is broken by the deluge of iniquity. By large and frequent emigrations of our sensualists, and other deserters from humanity, mankind is thinned, and the brute creation overstocked. Now it is agreed, that of all brutes the most brutal is the volunteer in brutality; the brute self-made; the brute not from the decree, but abuse, of nature; the *strange* brute-affrighting brute, with the stature, vesture, voice, and face of man; the brute *mysterious*, irrationally rational, and (with horror let me speak it, *deplorably* immortal.

This is the picture. — Knowest thou not of whom? Though drawn by no master-hand, the likeness will be confessed by all, but by those
alone

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alone, who *prove* it to be like. To spoil the picture, they must mend their lives ; and discipline their own hearts to be revenged on me. All I write is waste paper, if they become men. Till then, all their censures recoil on themselves, and by falsely condemning, make the likeness more just.

Does the *Centaur* still sound too harsh in their ears ? I will so far indulge them, as to change it for *Slave*; and instead of making free with their hides, only rattle their chains. For chains they wear, galling, infamous chains ! Till stubborn, and wild will, is broken by Grace, and Reason, no man is free ; but madly prefers the heavy burdens of his lusts, and the scourges of conscience,

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science, to the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

And is it possible that *pride* should be the growth of slavery? They are proud of bondage, triumph in infamy, and imagine that in their high flights of folly, and riot unrestrained, there is something great. No man is great, till he sees that every thing in this world is little. And of all that is little, that *they* are the least. Would they know what is greatness? Great is he, and he alone, who makes the whole creation, and its amazing Cause, the *circumference*, and his own *true* interest, the *centre*, of his thoughts. Who has strength and steadiness, to weigh in perpetual and equal balance, right and wrong, body and soul, time and eternity, nature and God; and so weighing,

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to disdain any *very* anxious thought, for less than the greatest good his limited nature admits, and his all-powerful God has promised to bestow. That God, *whose are the pillars of the earth, and who has set the world upon them. Who in his wrath thunders out of heaven, and his adversaries are broken to pieces.*

In this, Sir, in giving our supreme good, our supreme effort and concern, in spite of all temptation, lies the greatness of man. Well may it lie in a prudence, *such* a prudence, as angels cannot exceed. If this is wanting, vain are all other pretensions to greatness, whether of King, Hero, or Philosopher. And a *Cæsar*, a *Marlborough*, a *Newton*, a *Bolingbroke*, a *Fidler*, *Tumbler*, and *Scaramouch*, may be thrown

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thrown together into one promiscuous heap of equal impotence for attaining true greatness. The *performance*, indeed, of each of these candidates for glory, the multitude may admire; but the *performer*, at the same time, will be condemned by the wise, as little-minded and mean; nay, as a very *fool*, in the language of Scripture; that is, in the judgment of God.

You see, therefore, to what titles of renown our *fine men*, on the strictest enquiry, may put in a just pretence: Fool! Slave! Centaur! — The last is the newest, and (which would be well for them) may be the least understood; but let them chuse which they please. Were it referred to me, their antichristian glory should be quite aggrandized, and shine, like

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his *Holiness*, triple-crowned with all three.

To that tremendous Power, which alone is *truly* great, and good; in whose favour is all light, life, hope, peace, joy, and salvation; be thanks, praise, and dominion over the *Rebel*, *Fool*, *Slave*, and *Centaur*, in our hearts. And may our hearts, thus exorcised, have a lively *feeling* of the God invisible; and, panting for the rivers of *true pleasure* at his right hand, abhor the *life in vogue*; and in *faith* unshaken, and *virtue* unfeigned, be confirmed for evermore: nor longer (to the reproach eternal of the present age) let our sins, as well as our situation, proclaim us to be

--*Toto divisos orbe Britannos.* VIRG.

But,

But, to damp my rising hope, I know not if *another* distinction of *Britons* from the greatest part of mankind, may not have been the glorious indeed, but fatal, cause of this most ignominious effect. It is the great Glory of God to draw good out of evil. To draw evil out of good is the great infamy of man.

I suspect, that an insolent pride in *British* liberty, in some measure, inspires *British* license of thought, and extravagance of opinion ; which as extravagant a practice for ever follows: If so, Vice, and Infidelity, are as much our national distempers, as the Scurvy, or the Spleen. Though discretion much befriends happiness, happiness is no friend to discretion. Great blessings intoxicate. Liberty, fraught with blessings as it is, when *unabused*,
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has, perhaps, been abused to our destruction. And as *British* Malt, sublimated into the most pernicious Liquor, now so much in use, so *British* Liberty, carried into Licentiousness, has poisoned and brutalised the *British* State. By too much exalting our Spirits, it corrupts our Manners; and that Glory of our constitution is the disgrace of our lives. Purely to prove themselves free men, some turn Infidels: Hanging themselves would be as good, and, to the public, a less pernicious, proof. Such men should perform a long quarantine ere admitted to the embrace even of a brother. Heaven preserve thee, my friend, from the freedom, and wisdom, and happiness, now in vogue. He is most free who is bound by the laws; he is most wise who owns himself weak; he is most happy who

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abridges

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abridges his *pleasures*; and he is most magnanimous, O ye bold, intrepid, Heaven-defying, *Britons!* who fears his God.

He, indeed, is the most magnanimous, for by that fear he is fortified against all other. And he is *by far* the most happy; for the divine favour, the light of God's countenance is the Sun of the human soul, whence all its vegetation of real felicity; and though the world, (which from Him receives all its feeble rays) may greatly shine in our eyes, yet, as wisely, may we expect vigorous and vivifying heat from the Moon, as any *solid* satisfaction from It.

But just one word to the Busy, Ambitious, Learned, and Gay.

C c 4

Vice

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Vice and Virtue excepted, no man on earth can say, what is Good or Ill, in as great a tumult and uproar as your passions are, O ye *Busy!* and *Ambitious!* about every thing *else*; and to love, and labour at, what God commands, and to desire, and hope, what he promises, is the single great lesson, O ye *Learned!* and the single true pleasure, O ye *Gay!* of human life.

And now, my Friend, Farewell, I must trust myself no longer with the Pen; for while I think there is a possibility, that, touched by some happy Stroke, but one fellow mortal may be raised from a perishing *man of the earth*, to a blessed Immortal, my busy mind perpetually suggests new hints, and my heart knows not how to refrain from pursuing them.

The

The Volume grows upon my hands, till its very bulk would defeat its end. New rays of thought dart in upon me, which, like cross lights, confound and perplex each other. Something of this you may have perceived already. Struck with the importance of the subject, I have been charmed as on enchanted ground; and whenever I was about to leave it, some new path has brought me back to near the same points again. Even Centaurs *have been* human, and I feel the strong tie of humanity, when going to bid them a last, an everlasting Farewell. Like one about to leave unhappy friends in the midst of a destruction, which yet, by timely care, they might escape, still, at the moment of departure, some new caution occurs to me, some new exhortation, something
unpaid,

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unsaid, or not so well said, as it might have been. But now, the Adieu must be final. With only this additional, and still more urgent, and to them surprizing, motive for Reformation, (*viz.*) My Assuring them, that what I have hitherto through tenderness, allowed to pass for Fable, is actual Fact. That the Centaur is *indeed* not Fabulous. That a man without Religion is *really* a Beast; and such is he pronounced in Scripture, where it is said that * *He also is Flesh*; that is, is a Brute! And, (what should strike them not a little) this is assigned as the reason for sweeping away our degenerate race by the Flood. A Brute, in truth, he is, with this only difference, that his superior understanding gives him more venom than the most en-

* Gen. vi.

venomed

venomed of Serpents; and enables him to do more fatal mischief to himself, and others, than without the curse of Reason, of abused reason, could possibly be done. So far therefore is it from Satire, that kind Admonition is all, which the word Centaur implies. And as in some words there was once imagined to reside a magic power over *Demons* themselves, that opinion might still prevail, if the design of these letters, to the wish of all honest men, could succeed, and the foul Nature of the Centaur be cast out by the Name. If this should be the fortunate event, these pages would live in the lives of those they shall reclaim. And if so, O *Bolingbroke*! and you, his applauding Idolizers! what to *this* is that vain Immortality which the meanest writers

ters wish, and which the noblest can scarce attain? Praise is an error, where Pardon is indulgence; and pardon is indulgence to the brightest parts misapplied. They rather provoke, than please, the worthy mind, by laying it under the disagreeable necessity, and clashing dispositions, of admiring the Writer, and disapproving the Man. Which, in some sort, is like admiring *Nero* for his Fiddle, when, through his own frenzy, his glorious Capital was in flames.

I am, my dear Friend,

Nov. 29. 1754.

Truly Yours.

P O S T S C R I P T.

I Received your objections, and thank you for them. I believe every judicious reader will make the same. All I can say, for mitigation of their

their sentence, is, that they who take on them to read Lectures in this laughing age, if they wish an audience but moderately large, must have weight enough to make impresson on the serious; and levity enough to catch those wanton ears, which, unless tickled by that feather, would continue shut as close, as their silly hearts are to virtue, though an Angel should take the chair.

I know you are so kindly concerned for your Friend's Reputation, that the mixture of Levity with Solemnity, in these Letters, makes you apprehensive of its exposing the Writer to censure or ridicule. Yet, how is it possible to write on so dreadfully mixed a subject, as the ways of man, without being agitated by the most contradictory emotions? His follies

follies fantastically wrong, so ludicrously absurd: His capacities for Virtue and Happiness, so noble: His Vices so shocking: Their consequence so deplorable.---So earnestly desirous I am of waking him from that dream, in which he nods upon the brink of eternal ruin, that if nothing can do it but my own disgrace, my own *buffoonery* (as perhaps he will think it), I rejoice to fall so low. If he will but laugh *with* me, at *himself*, he is freely welcome to laugh *at* me, as much as he sees cause. It is not his applause, but his Welfare, that is sought. *Amendment* is the point in view. That point unproposed, (and could the * Viscount propose it?) all Censure is mere Malice, and mere Impertinence is all Harangue; and entitles a *Tub-*

* Lord Bolingbroke.

ly, a *Bellingbrake*, and a Parrot, to
 just the same portion of our esteem,
 and applause. Would you, my
 Friend, judge aright of men? Ask
 not *what* they have done, but *why*;
 or their characters will be still in the
 dark.---But I fear I am setting your
 judgment of men too right for my
 own Interest; I must leave it under
 the power of some Partiality, for
 the sake of your humble Servant.

Pardon one word more. * *Cen-
 saur* is of *Greek* extraction, and signi-
 fies Stimulation. May it here prove
 (as intended) a Spur to Virtue; and,
 most, in myself. Standing in awe of
 my own pen, may I take the Coun-
 sel I give. Thus only can I be *sure*
 of doing any Good; thus only can I
 boldly say, without the Reader's leave,

* From *Kervier*, *stimulare*.

that

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that I have not writ in vain. Is not this a new Expedient for writing to some little Purpose; and an Expedient of no small Service to the Publick, if all our writers would use the same? Their Numbers, then, would be less a Nuisance; and half the nation (blessed Change!) would aim at Virtue, as well as Fame. This, too, might be some sort of Apology for those Heroes of the Pen, who, dauntless at their own danger, with the Spirit of a *Curtius*, for the sake of their dear Country, leap headlong into the Press, (too hasty Patriots!) and perish there.

Vincit amor patriæ, laudumque immensa cupido. VIRG.

F I N I S.



